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HARVARD COLLEGE

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MEPHISTOPHILES

IN

ENGLAND;

OR,

THE CONFESSIONS OF A PRIME MINISTER.

Ful many a man hath he begiled er this,
And wol, if that he may live any while:
And yet men gon and riden many a mile,
Him for to seke and have his acquaintance.

CHAUCER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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Porcellian Club

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MEPHISTOPHILES

IN

ENGLAND.

BOOK THE THIRD.

CHAPTER V.

Town *versus* the country ; an argument in which all the interesting peculiarities of streets and fields are separately considered, and their advantages fairly discussed, to the great profit of those who wish to give this subject a full and impartial investigation.

THE observations of Mephistophiles on the subject of cookery were brought to a conclusion ; and I became attentive to the conversation of my companions, who were arguing upon the advantages and peculiarities of a town and a country residence.

"There is no place," said Mephistophiles, "in which human nature can be studied with so much advantage as a great city, for it contains almost every variety of character into which mankind are capable of being divided. In country villages, and places remote from general intercourse with the world, although good and bad may be found mingled together as they are at all times, in the proportion of 'one halfpenny worth of bread to such a prodigious quantity of sack,' they do not contain that diversity of either which may be discovered in densely populated districts. Some silly people are much influenced by what they call the beauty of the objects among which they move and

breathe, and consider the fields, the streams, the flowers, and the stars, as ties formed to bind their hearts in loving bondage with their homes. Stuff!"

"Exactly," observed the noble parasite. "Your highness has expressed the very meaning of my thoughts ; but in a manner much more powerful and elegant than I could have used. The only advantage of the country is in providing one with good tenants who pay high rents, with good sport in hunting and shooting during the season, with good crops upon one's land to defray town expenses, with some good specimens of womankind on one's farms to smile upon one's rural enjoyments, and with a few other good things equally necessary to the comfort and respectability of a person of fashion. I am a man of the world, and have learned how to enjoy life. Buttercups and daisies are flimsy things, but there is solid excellence in bricks and mortar."

"Ay!" said the admiral, with something like an appearance of sarcasm, "the country air is certainly pleasant at times, after having been a d---d long cruise in every infernal climate under the sun ; but what person of real taste would ever think of comparing it with the substantial delights of a London atmosphere ? Pooh ! It's a jollyboat to a man-of-war." And the laugh of Sir Antler burst out like a ship's broadside.

"True, very true, admiral," replied his lordship, joining in the laugh. "Your facetiousness is irresistible, upon my honour."

"Ay, ay, my lord, I know something of these matters," continued the knight of the Bath. "I was born and bred in London ; and before I went to sea, knew every nook and corner in the place as well as I now know a cable from a marlinspike. London's the place after all. Talk of flowery lanes and sweet retreats ! It would take a devilish clever poet to describe the beauties of Field-lane ; and some of the finest *pisantry* in the world can tell you that there are no retreats half so sweet as those in the neighbourhood of the Seven Dials. Ha ! ha ! ha !" His laugh again resounded through the room. "Plantations have their value," he continued. "D---e, without them we should have to build our 'wooden walls' of stone ; but what are those country sticks compared to our London

clubs?" Here broke forth another peal of obstreperous merriment.

"Ah, admiral, you'll be the death of me!" exclaimed Lord Sponge, attempting to restrain a mirth which was affected. "Yes; the country is of little service. It may boast of its annual fairs, but not one of them could exhibit so much attraction as our 'May fair.'"

"Not to mention our 'fancy fairs,'" said Augustus St. John, with a languid smile.

"Or our fashionable fair," added Captain Fitz-Grey, with a yawn.

"Gentlemen, you are too amusing," observed his lordship, apparently attempting to look grave. "Really you should have some consideration for my humorous susceptibilities. We hear a great deal about 'the lowing herds' and the 'fleecy flocks'; but such tame animals could never be brought in juxtaposition with the beasts in the Zoological Gardens."

"No, I'm d—d if they could, without being devoured!" shouted Sir Antler, as he gave the table a thump which set the glasses ringing, and immediately favoured the company with a peal of laughter louder than any that had preceded it.

"*Pour l'amour de Dieu!* gentlemen, have some pity upon me!" exclaimed the exquisite, looking particularly horrified. "I am not deaf unluckily, nor would I be made so *par choix*. However, as you have determined to hunt down the subject, I suppose I must attempt my *jeu de mot* before it is put *hors de combat*." Here he fixed his eyes significantly on Lord Sponge. "To keep up the comparison, I will say that you may go any night to a certain house in St. James's, where, even in winter, you may observe men 'reaping a harvest,' though they perform the operation in a manner somewhat different from the method usually practised in corn-fields."

"In other districts in town," remarked the young legislator, trying to speak with becoming gravity, "some prudent folks may always be discovered 'making hay while the sun shines.'"

"And to such an extent are we agriculturists," said the admiral, slyly winking at Sir Dumpling, "that there is

scarcely a person with a decent head of hair who does not fully understand the value of *crops*."

"There is not a milliner in Bond-street," observed his lordship, with an emphasis which could not be misinterpreted, "who cannot discourse of *lawns*, as familiarly as the most enthusiastic Damon in existence."

"And many a frequenter of Tattersall's," continued the M. P., with a more visible smile, "however ignorant of ditching he may be, is fully competent to explain the mystery of *hedging*."

"The rural dance and the rural song, which poets talk of," remarked the guardsman, "may give pleasure to provincials; but I should like to see a village *danseuse* perform a *pirouette* with the elegance of Taglioni, or hear a rustic *cantatrice* execute a *cadenza* with the brilliancy of Malibran."

"Even in the scenic advantages the town may vie with the country," said the admiral, looking as if he was going to say something particularly brilliant; "for what can be more *arcade-ian* than the neighbourhoods of Piccadilly, the King's Theatre, and the West Strand?"

Of course this sally was liberally laughed at, but by none more than by the utterer.

"Having by the relation of these facts proved the superiority of town in natural advantages," observed Mr. Augustus St. John, with the air and tone of a premeditated speech, "let us proceed to investigate the different characters of the inhabitants of cities and villages. In the first place—"

"A thousand pardons!" exclaimed Lord Sponge, interrupting the oration he saw preparing. "When a landed proprietor visits his estate, his labourers immediately consider the propriety of giving him a *warm* welcome, and on the first night of his country residence he is waked out of his sleep by the cheerful sight of his hayricks in a blaze; or, going to shoot a few of his own pheasants on his own lands, some of his sporting neighbours of the humblest origin, imagining that he is interfering with their privileges, waylay the gentleman in his preserves; and after bestowing upon their landlord many impressive proofs of their attachment, they leave him minus half a dozen teeth, his purse and watch, and his double-barrelled, a hundred guinea Joe Manton. If by the merest

accident in the world he should happen to become acquainted with some 'chaste Diana' on his estate, in a few months afterward a singular three-cornered-cocked-hatted individual in blue, turned up with red, will wait upon him with the compliments of the overseers. He discovers that the politeness of the parish officers arises from the immediate probability that the fair goddess will increase the number of his majesty's subjects ; and after being comfortably bullied by three of the damsel's indignant brothers, and one virtuous father, he pays a considerable sum to accommodate matters, and in a few days 'the young Astyanax' makes his appearance, the exact image of one of his ploughmen."

A general laugh ensued.

"Captain Fitz-Grey, the claret!" cried the admiral.

"Sponge," exclaimed Sir Dumpling, "ring the bell and order coffee." The man of the world obeyed.

"If he is a member of parliament," continued his lordship, looking rather pointedly towards Mr. Augustus St. John, "and his politics do not happen to meet the views of the alehouse legislators, greater dangers threaten him. If he join the neighbouring hunt, in attempting to leap one of his own hedges it is ten to one he finds himself impaled by a pitchfork, held by some friendly tenant on the opposite side ; and should he return home late at night, he has sometimes the pleasure of hearing a bullet from an airgun pass within an inch of his head. If he has the good fortune to be 'the man of the people,' he must undergo perils of a different kind. He must give balls to the wives and daughters of his constituents, and every night must be danced to death through reels and country-dances with partners more gracious than graceful, who generally possess the attractions of prize beef, fed upon oilcake and mangelwurzel. He must attend political dinners, wretchedly cooked and more miserably provided, where he must talk as much nonsense as his audience can digest, on such subjects as universal suffrage, ballot, and popular rights, and be poisoned with as much bad wine as may be placed within his reach, in roasting the government and toasting the mob ; and, to add to his enjoyments, he will discover that his friends are not only attached to himself, but have an equal affection for everything belonging to him : they drive their pigs into his turnip fields ; make free with the produce of his orchards ;

snare his game ; carry off a sheep occasionally, when they cannot resist the calls of nature for his mutton ; and pay a visit to his poultry when they are desirous of enjoying the luxury of *poached* eggs."

"Bravo!" exclaimed the admiral, his eyes sparkling with childish delight ; "your lordship's the drollest fish I've met with, since I saw off the coast of Cuba a d——d ugly non-descript monster that wanted to swim off with the ship's anchor tucked under his starboard fin."

"Thank ye, Sir Antler," replied his lordship, evidently not exactly pleased with the compliment ; "you do me too much honour."

"No cream," said Mr. Augustus St. John to the servant who handed him coffee.

"You're right, my dear sir," said the officious toad-eater ; "never take cream after wine—it curdles on the stomach."

"Ay," said the admiral, with his usual laugh ; "makes syllabubs against your will."

"I have been describing to you some of the delights of a country life," observed his lordship ; "but how insipid they appear when brought into comparison with the enjoyments of town—dear, delightful town!"

"You may well say *dear!*!" exclaimed Sir Antler emphatically.

"It would be useless," continued Lord Sponge, "to mention all the advantages fashion confers on the metropolis which are not bestowed by her upon the provinces. Every man of taste must prefer the beauties which may often be observed in Willis's Rooms to the picturesque charms of nature. The opera and the ballet, although somewhat *foreign* to the purpose, speak for themselves. The extent to which the moral virtues are exhibited in cities would quite surprise your village philosophers. I am a man of the world, and nothing surprises me. The London tradesmen frequently announce that 'they are selling goods much under prime cost, *pro bono publico*.' They do not barter so cheaply—they cannot make use of Latin—and they boast not of such philanthropy in the country ; ergo, the countryman must be less honest, less learned, and less generous than the citizen. The metropolitans occasionally declare themselves 'ruined,' that their customers might meet with

an opportunity of finding ‘great bargains,’ a sacrifice never heard of in rural neighbourhoods; and other honest citizens have more than once on the eve of retiring from business offered their goods ‘for any price they would fetch,’—instances of wholesale benevolence scarcely to be paralleled among the rustic chapmen. Other evidence, which proves the moral superiority of the men of streets over the men of fields, consists in the immense number of ‘safe and effectual remedies’ the humanity and skill enclosed in bricks and mortar have discovered for the purpose of counteracting ‘all the ills which flesh is heir to.’ For every malady that afflicts the human race there may be found at least fifty ‘certain cures;’ yet such is the perversity of human nature that hundreds of people die every day.”

“D——d fools!” ejaculated the admiral, as he gulped down his coffee.

“Having sufficiently established the moral superiority of the town,” remarked Mr. Augustus St. John, once more attempting to perpetrate a speech, “it becomes necessary to say a word or two on the superior taste and refinement of the citizens. My right honourable friend has said—”

“Exactly so!” exclaimed Lord Sponge, interrupting the orator, to his great annoyance; “and I was going to say that the countryman lives in his cottage, a simple unadorned edifice, with which he and his forefathers were satisfied. He never thinks of any more extensive alteration than a new thatch, or a fresh pigsty. He knows nothing of architecture, never having heard the name mentioned. But the inhabitants of London seem anxious to adorn their residences with all the splendour of architectural embellishment. It was once a great boast that every man’s house was his castle; but now the people seem ambitious of turning their dwellings into palaces. It costs as much to build a public-house as would be expended in erecting a parish church. Corinthian capitals are as common as chimney-pots; at every step one meets with Grecian colonnades and Roman piazzas; and the sacred temples of antiquity serve as models for club-houses and bazars—emporiums of haberdashery, or depôts of fancy goods. But the taste of the present age is not confined to imitating the beauties of the ancients. Some edifices, of a modern date, have been built on designs which most certainly never could have entered the heads of any but the in-

genious artisans to whose singular taste and skill we are indebted for their erection. London architects determine to be original. To me, as a man of the world, this does not appear strange. Our wise ancestors found in nature the origin of those ideas which art and genius enabled them to turn to advantage ; but our wiser contemporaries scorn owing any obligation to anybody ; consequently, their conceptions are as unlike anything in heaven or earth, or in the waters under the earth, as lath and plaster can possibly be. We have buildings in our streets, nothing similar to which has ever been raised since the polishing of boots and shoes has been considered one of the *beaux arts*, or Hodge's compounds 'the Pierian spring !' The magnificent palace of those *shining* lights of the age, the Beaumont and Fletcher of *polished* life, Day and Martin ; and the classic temple of those creatures of the *spirit*, the Sternhold and Hopkins of our popular *measures*,—Thomson and Fearon—stand out among the most conspicuous specimens of modern architecture with which this city is adorned. But these novelties are as numerous as they are various ; for we have the Egyptian and Arabic, the Grecian and Gothic, the Roman, Saxon, Tuscan, and fifty other styles of building, standing side by side 'in most admired disorder.' "

" Ay, ay !" remarked the admiral, with a more serious expression of countenance than he had hitherto adopted ; " this comes of ' the march of intellect,' and such d——d stuff. They say the schoolmaster's abroad, and I believe it. On my last cruise, my bo-san wanted all of a sudden to become wiser than his betters ; so he studied the ' rigidity of cordage,' as he called it, and broke his neck by falling from the mast-head, where he had been making experiments with the rigging ; and two marines fell overboard while puzzling their brains with ' hydrostatics,' and were drowned. My ship got turned into a regular ' stinkomalee.' The middies were philosophers, and the loblollyboys lectured on chymistry. They learned everything, and understood nothing. The watch, instead of thinking of their duty, thought of squaring the circle ; and the topmen, when they ought to have left the vessel scudding under bare poles, were arguing on the polarization of light. There were such lots of penny libraries, and halfpenny cyclopedias ! and such cargoes of cheap magazines, and cheaper treatises ! However, when

I found the black cook going to prove that water will always find its own level, by forming an infernal leak in the hold ; and discovered a young rascal, who scarcely knew his stern from his figure-head, wanting to demonstrate that fire will pass through gunpowder at a certain velocity, by firing red-hot bullets into the powder magazine—I thought 'twas d——d high time to put an end to all philosophy on board ship. So to a few of the cleverest I gave a spell at the grating ; and every book I could find I sent to some Useful Knowledge Society below, at which Davy Jones acts as president, and for which Mother Cary writes treatises on political economy."

"Very good, Sir Antler," said his lordship, with an encouraging smile ; "you are amazingly humordus to-night. But the schoolmaster is not abroad ; he is at home, and his residence is in town. This accounts for the wisdom of our citizens, and the ignorance of the country people. Here the popular pedagogue takes upon himself the character of a petty trafficker in small literature, and deals out information in pennyworths. Through his means, periodicals have become miraculously cheap."

"Yes!" said Mephistophiles, sarcastically ; "but they must be distributed gratuitously before their readers can have them at their full value."

"True—ha ! ha !—true—very true. Your highness is again beforehand with me," exclaimed the nobleman, with a sort of half laugh. "Now let us consider the advantages of London locomotion. Times have been when discreet travellers were obliged to undergo the felicity of making their wills when they were desirous of setting forth on a joufney, which was then long and hazardous, but is now performed, by a safe conveyance, in a few hours. Instead of the London fly proceeding ten miles a-day, the best coaches go ten miles an hour. But people, in this refined age and intellectual city, will not be denied the luxury of breaking their necks ; and as the speed of the swiftest horses does not appear to afford sufficient probability of so desirable an enjoyment, 'to make assurance doubly sure,' they are determined to have it done by steam. Ten miles an hour is considered but a snail's pace ; they wish to go at the rate of fifty in the same time. Railroads abound with delights unknown ; such as dislocations, fractures, and contusions ; but nothing appears so

satisfactory as the possibility of being blown into mincemeat. Therefore railroads have come into favour, and steam-engines into fashion ; and with such velocity may we be conveyed from place to place, that the good folks of London will, no doubt, shortly be able to breakfast at York, lunch at Edinburgh, join a picnic party in the Highlands, and return the same evening in time for the theatre ; unless they should happen to get exploded on the way. I am a man of the world, and have made it my business to see these things. In many parts of the country the only conveyance to be procured is a curious-looking vehicle, unknown in Long Acre, called in the vernacular a *po-shay* ; and in this uncomfortable and unseemly object people are drawn by a pair of sorry cattle, always, by a strange coincidence, starved, blind, and lame. In some places even this accommodation is not procurable, and you can only get a wretched cart, dignified by the name of a *gig*, in which the unhappy individual who therein trusts his person will shortly find himself like an apothecary's mixture in the hands of a careful nurse, labelled 'to be well shaken.' The London carriages are far more convenient, at least I have heard so from good authority ; for it cannot be imagined that I ever trusted myself in any of these hackney conveniences."

The latter part of the sentence was expressed with considerable dignity for a man of the world.

"Never patronised a jarvey ! d——e, but I have though !" exclaimed the admiral, with a boisterous appearance of glee. "Lord ! before I had a carriage of my own I used frequently to take a sail in any of the common craft ; and even now, upon occasions, I hail 'em as I used."

"You don't say so !" said his lordship, rather alarmed.

"I should not like to be your *compagnon de voyage*," observed the exquisite, dryly.

"Maybe not, maybe not," replied Sir Antler, with much satisfaction ; "yet a man can't always be in one ship—and after all, they are not such bad sailors. I've seen them cut along against the wind like a revenue cutter in chase of a smuggler. In the cabs, while progressing at a most desirable speed, you stand a capital chance of being snugly deposited in the first mud-cart that approaches."

"*Très-agréable !*" exclaimed Captain Fitz-Grey, with a shrug.

"Or if the horse should give a skilful slip," continued the admiral, "you may rival the worshippers of Juggernaut, who piously immolate themselves under the chariot-wheels of their stupendous idol, by finding yourself comfortably smashed under the expansive wheels of a brewer's dray."

"Exquisite!" ejaculated the lord.

"*Félicité extraordinaire!*" remarked the captain.

"In the hackney-coaches," proceeded the admiral, "you may sit down in the enjoyment of the pleasant probability that your predecessor in the same vehicle had been conveyed therein for the benefit of science: in more popular language, that you had been preceded by a 'stiff-un!'"

"How very gratifying!" said his lordship, emphatically.

"*C'est charmant!*" observed the exquisite, with disgust.

"But nowhere can the social virtues be so generally cultivated as in an omnibus," continued Sir Antler, quite delighted that he had found such attentive listeners. "Twenty sulky people are sitting together as taciturn as signposts. All sorts of persons, of every kind of occupation, may there be found: the pretty milliner's apprentice, and the greasy butcher's boy; the banker's confidential clerk in gaiters, and the gentleman of the swell-mob in top-boots. Here a respectable tradesman, there a d—d vagabond. All are as dumb as fishes. The youth with the mutton-chops attempts to dissipate the general melancholy by whistling 'Sally in our Alley'; but he meets a dozen faces frowning upon him like the devil, and the imperfect notes die in his throat. Address an observation to the stiff gentleman on your right, and he eyes you askance, as if he thought your coat was threadbare, or suspected you of an intention to pick his pocket; pay a compliment to the discreet gentlewoman on your left, and she curls up her back like an enraged kitten, and favours you with a freezing look, as if she imagined you had a design upon her fifty-year-old virtue!"

"Capital description, by Jove!" exclaimed the noble lord. "The pleasantest thing I've heard this age, positively."

"Thus it is evident," observed Mr. Augustus St. John, who took advantage of a momentary silence to gain a hearing, "the town has immense advantages over the country. 'Look on this picture and on that—Hyperion to a satyr.' Enough has been said on this subject. Sighing

Strephons will no more be figured in pea-green spencers and sky-blue inexpressibles ; Turkey carpets will be thought more pleasant to the feet than the velvet sward ; and fashion will now and for ever exert her rightful supremacy over the unjust and most preposterous encroachments of nature. There are, however, a few observations of peculiar interest to you in particular, and to the community in general, which ought here to be introduced. No argument concerning the country should be allowed to pass without some discussion on a subject of paramount importance to individuals—of vital importance to the state. I speak of the corn-laws. While —"

Here the promised oration was most summarily concluded by the rapid breaking up of the party.

CHAPTER VI.

We proceed to Lady Alderney's *soirée*.—Mephistophiles describes some of the modern antiques of society—the Corinna, the Machiavelli, and the Bacon.—I hear some portions of my history before unknown to me, and am interrupted in an interesting conversation with the countess.—The Man of the World gives an interesting account of the state of music in England.

The carriages were so numerous in Grosvenor Place, that it was some time before we could drive up to Lady Alderney's door. Amid the swearing of coachmen, the bawling of policemen, the clatter of wheels, the snapping of whips, and the contact of poles and panels, we alighted ; and soon found ourselves proceeding up the grand staircase, at the extremity of a well-dressed crowd, who were endeavouring to advance to the drawing-room. By dint of some exertion and considerable ingenuity, we at last entered a splendid suite of apartments on the first floor, tastefully decorated for the occasion, and well filled with persons who were in some way or other distinguished from the mass of society. Many were unknown to me ; but as Mephistophiles acted as my cicerone, it was my own fault if I remained long in ignorance of their names or characters.

"Who is that beautiful and intellectual-looking woman, with her hair braided so classically, conversing with the Duke of Leatherhead?" I asked.

"That is the honourable Sybilla Scribe," he replied, *Mephisto*, "who has written many sweet verses, many sweet stories, and has manufactured a sufficient quantity of literary sweet-meats to gain among the good-natured multitude a considerable notoriety."

"I have read some of her poems, and think them very beautiful," said I. "She is generally reckoned the Corinna of the age."

"Perhaps she more resembles an Aspasia," he remarked, with something like sarcasm. "However, the duke is certainly not a Pericles. He is persuading her to have her portrait taken for a gallery of illustrious women of the present day his grace is now forming. She, 'nothing loath,' consents; and the duke will give an extravagant sum to a popular artist, who will 'show her up' in the next exhibition of the Royal Academy in some masquerade character, looking for inspiration and admiration, with a head of braided hair that shall be the envy of Truefitt, and scribbling her own name in a handwriting so delicately beautiful that every one will imagine it was produced by the new system of Carstairs, that gives proficiency in half a dozen lessons."

"In my opinion she is a woman of considerable genius," I observed, thinking that Mephistophiles was not doing her justice. "Is she not in some way related to the great Gammonem?"

"Great, do you call him?" he exclaimed, elevating his eyebrows. "True, in the judgment of this immaculate world, he was great. He was a great talker—a great prof ligate—a superior sort of Jeremy Diddler—a very brilliant specimen of nature's mosaic gold. His bright polish and shining appearance made many consider there was something sterling about him; it was mere brass. She is his granddaughter, the child of his hopeful son Tom. There is a showy girl about town who writes bad puns and stupid jokes, who also lays claim to a similar relationship to the great Gammonem: but Sybilla does not recognise her; she says she is an impostor. However, if the latter has no legitimate grounds for her claim, she may yet boast of the

honoured blood. The great orator was a very fatherly sort of character, and not particular to trifles. He patronised good-looking nursery-maids occasionally."

"He died under very peculiar circumstances, did he not?" I inquired.

"Very peculiar," he replied with emphasis. "His extravagance had ruined his fortune, and his excesses destroyed his health. While death was entering his bedroom door, the bailiffs were breaking into his drawing-room windows. I believe the former made the first seizure. Though he died impoverished and disgraced, and left his creditors without a sixpence to satisfy their claims, when his widow followed him, her executors proved for forty thousand pounds. 'Rather strange that,' you would say; but such things occur every day. However, they are a clever family. Mrs. Tom writes novels; one daughter composes songs; Sybilla manufactures all sorts of literary matters; and another member dashes about in his cabriolet, somewhat after the fashion of his illustrious progenitor. He has recently gained considerable celebrity by running off with a wealthy heiress; and for the success of this elopement he is much indebted to his beautiful relative. They are a *very* clever family."

"And who is that elegant, though certainly not very young creature, talking to Lord Mulberry?" said I, as I gazed in admiration on a lady with a most intellectual countenance. "If ever there were features expressive of genius, she possesses them."

"Indeed!" exclaimed my companion with a sneer; "genius, in the common opinion, means a facility of scribbling. Probably it is not misplaced here. Lady Stanza Dromedary is another wholesale purveyor of prettinesses to the pensive public. She has written novels and poems enough to gain her the reputation of a *bas bleu* among her acquaintance, and provide the tradespeople of a parish with waste paper. She has passed her best days. It may easily be imagined that, when very young, she was beautiful. Her ladyship was then one of the maids of honour to the old queen. Now her majesty was the very Pamela of the court. She called chanticleer 'the male fowl,' and turned away one of her pages for offending her royal delicacy by giving the bird its right name. The youthful Lady

Stanza had a very beautiful face, and a peculiarly beautiful figure, and was not by any means desirous of avoiding the admiration they occasioned. She led the fashion in her day ; and if her particular friends had unsatisfactory necks and arms, her ladyship would dress in low body and short sleeves. One day she came into the presence with part of her dress elegantly looped up, to display to greater advantage than usual her unrivalled leg. I am not certain her majesty went into fits, but I know the maid of honour was dismissed till she could appear in a more decorous attire. Some time afterward she married a clergyman and became serious ; since then she has been left a widow, and become clever."

"I have always heard a most amiable character of her," said I.

"Yes, your amiable people make up half the population," he replied ; "and the appearance of that universal virtue is hailed, as the shipwrecked sailor welcomed the gallows, as a sign of peculiar civilization. Ay, there stands the Marquis of Foreground, explaining the merits of that 'genuine Titian,' which is merely a copy, to the fair Countess of Rosepink. How eloquently his lordship displays the cant of the artist ! Her ladyship paints a little herself : her cheek will show with what skill. Observe that old gentleman with white flowing hair, and many decorations on his breast, sitting, or rather reclining his almost useless limbs, in that easy chair. His face does not indicate great genius ; 'tis that of 'a man cut after dinner of a cheese-eating' ; it expresses cunning rather than wisdom, imbecility instead of intelligence. Yet he is a person of genius, of extraordinary genius ; the greatest man of the age. He has made hypocrisy a science, and raised intrigue to a place among the useful arts. He is the famous Prince Protocol, the foreign ambassador, the modern Machiavelli. No one is so well acquainted with the secret machinery of governments ; and his superior knowledge has been called into operation whenever any part of the works was out of order. He has had a hand in all the movements ; has wound them up and set them going for the last fifty years, and has been, therefore, employed as a sort of regulator to his own government. Occasionally he has meddled with the wheels, and put the springs out, but he took care that no one should suspect him. Like the glazier in the story, he has more

than once had a fling at the church windows that he might have to do the repairs—the mischief, of course, was done in the dark. He now mends church windows by the year, and has a similar stipend for regulating the state machinery. No one understands so well the doctrine of appearances : he has studied it till he has obtained an unequalled proficiency. None know better the utility of oaths, and the advantage of employing them upon appropriate occasions. The frequency with which he has used them is almost equalled by his repetition of their perjuries. Like a person who, from taking small portions of poison, is enabled by practice to swallow any quantity with impunity, the prince has so disciplined himself, that he might with safety employ any and every kind of oath. Kings are the automata of his creating ; the people wonder and admire ; the machinist laughs and profits. Such is this venerable minister ; the father, or, I should say, the grandfather of modern diplomacy."

" But who is the thin man, with that vulgar face, talking to him ? " I inquired.

" Oh, that is no other than the celebrated, or notorious, which you like, Lord Bubble and Squeak. He is considered by a discerning few, of which number he of course forms one, the Bacon of the present age. Whether any similarity exists, remains to be proved. The author of the *Novum Organon* was a great pedant, an illustrious humbug, a magnificent hypocrite. He rose into power by dexterous intrigues ; he gained popularity as a denouncer of abuses ; and he was driven out of office in consequence of pursuing his natural love of corruption to an extent beyond all precedent. He lived in deceit, and died in disgrace. To this the life of the right honourable Lord Bubble and Squeak cannot by any possibility be compared ; and, of course, it must not be expected that his end will resemble that of this estimable personage : but you will know him better shortly."

We at last approached the countess. She was relating something which appeared of particular interest to a circle of attentive listeners, from whom I heard exclamations of—" How strange ! "—" How romantic ! "—" How very singular ! "—" Can it be possible ! "—" Well, I should never have believed it." Her eye caught mine, and she slightly blushed ; yet she immediately advanced to meet us, and, as

I fancied, welcomed me with a particular cordiality. She introduced us to those around her, who, I found, were the select of her set.

"Dear me!" exclaimed the fat Dutchess of Ben Lomond, as she sidled towards me with the grace of a prize ox, "what an extraordinary story! Is it all true? Were you and your beautiful cousin shut up in a subterranean chamber in Melcombe House by that good-for-nothing Lady Honoria, and kept upon bread and water? How shocking!"

"And did you not escape with your young relative?" said the Marchioness of Pinmoney, an old dowager of considerable influence, who stationed herself closer to me than I thought agreeable. "You discovered an iron door that opened with a spring, and you touched it by accident, did you not?"

"Oh, no!" remarked Lady Acquiline Evergreen, a venerable spinster, before I could speak a word; "your ladyship is not quite correct. I had my information from undoubted authority. The young folks were confined in an attic, and they escaped by twisting their bed-clothes into ropes, and letting themselves down into the garden."

"There my account differs," said the honourable Colonel Boreall, a beau of the old school; "I was told that you were both turned out of the house by the young lady's cruel mother-in-law, and that you wandered about hand in hand gathering berries from the hedges, like the two babes in the wood."

"Really—" I commenced with the design of refuting these absurd errors, but I had scarcely opened my lips before I was interrupted.

"And the young lady lost the use of the organ of speech through the horrible conduct of Lady Melcombe, who forcibly compelled her to exist in a state of continual silence," remarked another of the coterie.

"How very shocking!" exclaimed half a dozen female voices with astonishing emphasis.

"Upon my honour," said I, making another effort to contradict the ridiculous fables I now found were in circulation concerning the early history of Dora and myself, but it was useless; I was again interrupted before I had concluded my sentence.

"Is it not true," inquired Lady Mary Dimpleton, with an

arch smile, "that you were discovered by a benevolent peasant, who was in search of some lost sheep, and taken care of till your uncle was made aware of your pitiable condition?"

"Not a word," said I.

"I was certain that part of the story was not correct," remarked the others in triumph.

"It is a fact, is it not, Mr. Herbert," said Lady Julia, rather maliciously, "your mutual sufferings bound you so closely together, that you both vowed to live and die for each other; and you swore a terrible oath, on a dogeared copy of Goody Two Shoes, to remain faithful till death?"

"I assure you it is not so," I exclaimed, laughing.

"I was convinced such a circumstance was not likely to occur," observed the dutchess, with profound gravity.

"The tales you have heard are very extraordinary," said I; "but, like many other amusing stories, do not contain a word of truth."

They all looked astonished and disappointed. As I wished to prevent any more such idle reports spreading, I briefly related some of the more interesting facts connected with the history of my cousin and myself. All listened with breathless attention, but Lady Julia apparently regarded me with a more flattering interest. There was a brilliant fascination in her eyes, that I seemed to feel even when my gaze was not directed towards her. I could not avoid regarding her with deep admiration. There was in her beautiful features an expression of lofty and stirring enthusiasm; and her eyes beamed with an intense love of all that breathed of passion and romance. She was a woman of a commanding intellect, a refined taste, and a glowing imagination; the reputed authoress of a novel of a striking and peculiar character; and the acknowledged writer of several less pretending productions in prose and verse, that evinced signs of considerable genius. We were left alone. The coterie had broken up, and were distributing the intelligence I had given them, and Mephistophiles had led Lady Mary into another apartment.

"I am not surprised," said I, as I seated myself by her side, "to observe here so many literary characters. Wherever superior merit exists it will appreciate the merit of others. Great minds have a magnetic influence; they attract round

them all that is intellectual. The genius which produced —— will always exert such an influence in the literary hemisphere as to make the brighter planets shine in its vicinity."

"So you, too, determine to give me the credit of that production?" said her ladyship.

"It has not yet been claimed," I replied; "but it bears too many marks of noble origin to doubt its source. I am charmed with the style, and not less delighted with the material. It does not merely deserve admiration as a specimen of fine writing; it is worthy to be treasured as an example of fine thinking."

"Your praise, I fear, is scarcely deserved," she remarked. "The study of human character is so difficult, and requires such careful observation, that it is almost impossible for an inexperienced, and a woman's feeble mind, to understand it thoroughly."

"With regard to the first part of your observation," said I, "all studies are difficult to the many; but there are a gifted few who see, as with the eyes of Argus, a thousand things at a glance, and not with a superficial view. The root, the heart, the nature of the world is exposed to them. I am one of those who are convinced, and ready to express that conviction, that the intellectual impulses of a woman are capable of producing as glorious creations as ever sprung from the brain of man. Nay, more; I am inclined to imagine, that in all matters relating to feeling and passion the fair sex possess a more natural, forcible, and refined knowledge than their masculine contemporaries. The graceful and peculiarly feminine character of your sentiments, as expressed in such of your writings as I have, fortunately for myself, perused, gain by that current of lofty poetical feeling on which they glide along."

"You show more liberality towards us than we have any right to expect," exclaimed my fair companion, as if desirous of giving a general purport to the compliment exclusively directed to herself. "But we are not allowed many advantages which you lords of the creation alone enjoy. Our minds are fettered with artificial restraints. We are forced to take an interest in all frivolous pursuits. We are only allowed to be blossoms, and never expected to be fruits. In the world of fashion woman is the high priestess of folly. I hope you are not come to be influenced

by the prophetic impulses of the idol. She is the chief directress of elaborate idleness. I trust your occupations will possess a greater claim to utility than the labours of the indolent crowd by whom we are surrounded."

" You do me too much honour to regard my appearance in this circle," I replied, with a feeling of devotion I expressed in my manner. " I shall consider my employment not only useful, but profitable, while I am allowed to worship in a temple where there is at least one minister exercising the spirit of a true inspiration. It is not because there are objects which are generally considered merely ornamental, that I should pass them by as having no other attraction than for the gaze. The blossom on the bough is seen and admired, but none behold the hidden treasure in the tree ; the flower on the ground is prized and gathered, but the mine of wealth that lies beneath dwells untouched and unnoticed."

" Herbert, *mon cher ami*. Ah, is that you ? *Mon Dieu !* talking to *la belle comtesse*, with the sobriety of a *doctrinaire moderne* explaining a new system of government. *C'est très extraordinaire* you did not observe me till I spoke. Explaining some *nouveauté* in the steam-engine, or relating *une bonne aventure* in your travels ?"

It was my friend the exquisite. I wished him in the crater of Vesuvius. The conversation with Lady Julia, though brief, had insensibly taken a tone of deep interest ; and a natural sympathy was commencing, which she did not seem inclined to discourage. Fitz-Grey's voice awakened me, much against my inclination, from a dream in which I was desirous of indulging ; and immediately afterward, Lord Counterpoint came to conduct the countess to the music-room, where her presence was required. As she left me her looks appeared encouraging.

" *Prenez garde, mon ami !*" exclaimed the guardsman, with a look of peculiar solicitude. " You go too fast. *Entre nous*, an acquaintance of a day will scarcely warrant a *tête-à-tête* such as I have interrupted, rather, I am afraid, *mal-à-propos*. To be sure hers was a *mariage de convenance* ; but she is a Diana. *Vive la belle passion !* say I ; but never lavish it on a stone. *En vérité* I speak from real friendship ; I never had any thought in that quarter. She is too *spirituelle*—too much of the *femme philosophe* for me.

In fact, she is a *femme de lettres*,—a sort of animal I would as soon make love to as to my apothecary. *Milles pardonnées* if I have appeared officious. I would not offend *pour tout du monde*.²²

"I cannot take offence," said I, rather annoyed, "where none is intended. But with regard to your caution, I think it perfectly superfluous. However, when I find myself in danger, I shall directly appeal to one whose advice, though ever ready, may not at all times be applicable."

I turned away; but Fitz-Grey made so many apologies for his untoward observations, and promised not to mention the subject again so earnestly, that I forgave him the annoyance he had occasioned. He had scarcely left me to go in search of Lady Dimpleton, when I met Lord Sponge. "From bad to worse," thought I.

"Ha!" exclaimed his lordship, in the most cordial manner possible, "unexpected pleasure! Left Sir Dumbley dreaming of undiscovered dishes. But there's music! Suppose we go?" I assented, and he took my arm. I was rather surprised to hear an English song, but I discovered that the countess was so unfashionable as to patronise native talent. I listened, and heard the following words sung with exquisite feeling to a melody of a very original character:—

"THE LAST LEAF OF AUTUMN.

"The last leaf of autumn, now yellow and sere,
In the chill grasp of winter hangs shivering here;
A thousand green banners waved round it,—but now,
Unhonour'd, unshelter'd, it clings to the bough!
The breeze that has fann'd it, the dews which it bore,
And the sunbeams that warm'd it, approach it no more;
The blossoms it loved have all faded and gone,
And the last leaf of autumn must perish alone!"

"Oh, last leaf of autumn! thy fate is like mine—
All looked blooming and bright in my pride as in thine;
Surrounded by smiles, the same sunshine I found,
And I thought that *my* spring would last all the year round;
But the world's cold neglect that cuts keen as a sword
Severed friends I had loved, and the heart I adored;
And now I may linger, unloved and unknown,
Like the last leaf of autumn, to perish alone!"

This touching ballad did not attract much attention, except from a select few round the piano. The rest of the company appeared to think any musical composition of English origin unworthy their notice. Another song followed of a more lively character; it was entitled,—

"THE FIRSTBORN OF SPRING."

"When the earth is wrapp'd in her death-like sleep,
 From her snow-white winding sheet 'twill peep,
 And as pale as a nun stand gazing about
 Till the watchful heavens have found it out,
 Ere the brooks have leap'd from their frostbound prison,
 And the southern winds from their dreams have risen.
 Who would be a snowdrop pale,
 To pray for the sunshine, and laugh at the gale?
 While with choral rejoicing the forest-birds sing,
 'Welcome! oh welcome! thou firstborn of spring!'

"And it comes ere the wintry war doth cease,
 Like a flag of truce bringing promise of peace;
 For as soon as he views its white banner unfurld,
 The gladd'ning sun again smiles on the world,
 While nature is humming her cheerfulness carol,
 And is robing herself in her gayest apparel.
 I would be a snowdrop pale,
 To pray for the sunshine and laugh at the gale.
 While in eloquent hymns the plumed foresters sing,
 'Welcome! oh welcome! thou firstborn of spring!'"

The stirring gladness of the melody of this song contrasted admirably with the exquisite pathos of the other. After the applause had subsided, another voice commenced.

"Ah, Grisi!" exclaimed my companion, "charming voice—only wants execution. Am something of a connoisseur in these things—at least ought to be. Was at Naples two seasons, and Vienna one. A man of the world, like myself, should know something of the subject. Besides, I've studied the science. Used to play and sing once, but it's a bore now."

As I thought I might gather some amusement from such a character, I let him go his full length.

"They say that music is not understood here. It is a mistake, my dear sir, quite a mistake. If we mark how quickly foreign compositions become familiarized among

us, we should question if the English people were less capable of admiring the beauties of such exotic melodies than the audiences for whom they were composed. I cannot walk the streets without some blind Orpheus delighting me with reminiscences of Rossini, or ravishing me with snatches from Auber. Every housemaid, as she performs her morning ablutions of the area steps, lightens her labour by warbling some popular fragment of 'Masaniello;' and every footboy, as he creates a splendour on his master's Wellingtons, whistles as he works the choicest melodies of 'Guillaume Tell.' But not only does music throw a charm over our 'domestic economy,' but its influence is visible in every stage of society. We have it in every shape, and in all places. It flings its spell over the gay abodes of pleasure, and produces as sweet an enchantment in the dull dwellings of traffick. Hunt's matchless caravan, as it rattles along the thoroughfares, affords employment to a performer on the key bugle, who denotes to the passenger the nature of the goods over which he is exercising a harmonic influence by playing 'Flow on, thou *shining* river;' and the guards of his majesty's mails, whenever they find their progress impeded by a concourse of other vehicles, express, upon a similar instrument, the nature of the inconvenience to which they are subjected, by striking up, 'We met—'twas in a crowd.' Nothing can demonstrate more clearly the improvement in the national taste than the difference that has taken place in our street performances within the last twenty years. I can remember when that band was considered choice which could boast of a drum large enough, when struck, to be heard all over the neighbourhood. By-the-by, that instrument is popular in every part of the world. When their Sandwich Island majesties were in this country, the band of the Foot-guards performed for their express gratification. King Tamehamehu being asked what instrument he liked best, eloquently gave the preference to the big drum. Well, besides the drum, the same operator, in our old street bands, exercised his ingenuity in torturing into sound a set of diabolical reeds called a mouth-organ; another produced a tone from a cracked clarionet that acted like a file upon your teeth; a squeak from a consumptive fife occasionally reminded you of the voice of an expiring sucking pig; and a fiddle, that had never been in tune, ex-

pressed the agonies of a kitten in a fit. Besides cymbals, tambarines, and triangles, an old woman occasionally laboured, with a zeal worthy of a better cause, upon an instrument, I am happy to say, now nearly obsolete, called a hurdygurdy, the horrors of which it is impossible to describe."

"What a charming concert they must have produced!" said I.

"As Robins says, 'the effect may be more easily imagined than described.' But we had also solo-players. These in greatest estimation were a cadaverous-looking Frenchman, who practised on an instrument probably of his own invention: it was a pig's bladder inflated, fastened to the upper part of a long stick; over these a few strings of catgut were stretched, which, when touched by a primitive kind of a bow, made of horse-hair, emitted a sound that Counterpoint never dreamed of."

"An original Paganini," I remarked.

"Quite!" he replied. "Then there was a fellow who was an orchestra in himself: his mouth played the Pandean pipes; his head, shaking at the same time, set in motion a number of little bells, attached to a brass helmet; between his knees were fixed a pair of cymbals, which he ever and anon knocked together with a most harmonious clang; a drum was fastened on his back, and the sticks attached to his elbows, and a mandoline was played upon by his hands. He was the wonder of the streets. In those days noise was considered harmony; and he who could create the greatest disturbance was thought the best musician. At the present time most of the street bands are composed of many instruments, played by performers of considerable talent. But then there are the barrel-organs."

"A nuisance," I observed, "which ought to be put down. They grind a tune—"

"Exactly, my dear sir, exactly!" said his lordship, interrupting me; "they grind a tune 'to tatters—to very rags.' There ought to be some legislative measure to banish them from the country. But pedestrian musicians are not always of the lower orders. It is a peculiar mark of the times, that young men of fashion, or of would-be fashion, who can play upon any instrument, make the tour of Great Britain as 'wandering minstrels'; and often ex-

tract from the pockets of the musically inclined something handsome. A natural son of the late Marjoram Cockle has been vagabondizing with his guitar as *The Castilian Minstrel*, and has lately published a very absurd account of his travels, called 'The Journal of Don Juan de Vagabundo.'

"Ay! I have seen him. He is a Creole. Did he not raise a battalion, at his own expense, for the service of Don Pedro? and—"

"When he arrived at Oporto, he was sent back again," hastily observed my companion.

"You're quite right; quite. The ex-emperor would not employ the dark little dandy, because he was ambitious of being appointed a colonel *instanter*. His men deserted him; the officers laughed at him; and he was left to return to England *minus* all his expenses. Don Juan has fretted himself into a consumption at the result of his patriotic exertions. I have heard that he once attempted to hang himself with a guitar string."

"In what key?" I asked, laughing.

"In suspension, no doubt, he produced *A Flat*," said his lordship.

"Not being allowed to live as Colonel Cockle, yet fully resolved upon obtaining some military distinction, he would have sought death in *a Major Chord*," I observed.

"Good! very good, upon my honour," exclaimed Lord Sponge, apparently extremely delighted. "But to return to our subject. The upper classes of society are great admirers of music. Their patronage of the Italian opera and the concerts is sufficient evidence of their taste. *Soirées* are in high fashion, and amateur concerts in universal esteem. Every beautiful woman is aware with what advantage she appears at the harp; and anxious mammas watch their graceful daughters' performances on the guitar or the piano, with hopes that some of the applauding young men, by whom they are surrounded, may desire to possess themselves of such tuneful treasures. More than one successful flirtation has commenced with a song; and a duet has frequently concluded with a similar performance for life. Harmony and matrimony go hand in hand—as far as the honeymoon, and 'music is the food of love'—till dinner-time. A short time since I went to the King's

Theatre, where I am much in the habit of going, to hear a new opera. Setting aside the beauty of the music, and the ability of the performers, which no one can enjoy with greater zest than myself, there is a feature in these performances that deserves especial remark. It is the continual coalition of the sublime with the ridiculous. A lover addresses his mistress with a flourish of semiquavers, which might move the flinty heart of the rock of Gibraltar; and the lady replies with a seductive *cadenza*, as intricate as the Cretan labyrinth. Two rivals quarrel in *recitative*, and the one runs the other through the body in a *bravura*. Then some cruel parent growls out his double-bass commands to his unfortunate son, who squeaks his disobedience in a *falso-setto*. The lovers make protestations *ad libitum*, take poison in a sweet *andante*, and die in a grave *adagio*. After which the chorus rush forward, and shout out horror and amazement *con fuore e con molto espressione*, with as much terror depicted in their placid countenances as you would find in the face of a genuine Dando, while his victim is opening for him a thirteenth dozen of the best natives."

I laughed, possibly more from courtesy than gratification.

"With the middle classes of society," continued my companion, "music finds also many patrons. There is scarcely a young lady in her teens, possessing so much as the shadow of a claim to respectability, who has not Moscheles or Herz 'at her fingers' ends.' Even the publican's daughter treats her father's best customers to 'Drops of Brandy' with variations; and the fruiterer's wife delights her friends with 'Cherry Ripe' all the year round. All the gentlemen who are ambitious of attracting the attention of the ladies, (and who is not?) study Drouet or Viotti, according to the instrument on which they are desirous of excelling. Every amateur violinist, perhaps out of politeness, wishes to become a proficient in *bowing*, notwithstanding which he often gets into 'scrapes'; and the innumerable flute players who adorn society have discovered the best method of *puffing* themselves into notice. These gentlemen *dilettanti* think there is nothing like music to keep up the harmony of the world around them; and they carry their enthusiasm in its favour to such a height, as sometimes to practise a melodious creaking as they walk, doubtless considering with the poet, that

He that hath no music in his *sole*
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils!"

The pun was not bad, therefore I had an excuse for a smile.

"Now, my dear sir," continued my loquacious companion, "I have mixed in every class."

Not always to your lordship's credit, thought I.

"I am a man of the world. I love to observe human nature in every rank of society, therefore I occasionally mingle with people who are much my inferiors in rank."

"As they are your superiors in moral and intellectual worth," said I to myself.

"I remember once going to a musical party which consisted entirely of amateurs. The host, of course, was allowed to play 'first fiddle,' though I could have sworn that his amiable partner was a more experienced performer. The orchestra was numerous rather than select. It consisted of three violins, none of which were in tune; a violoncello operated upon with more labour than skill; eleven flutes, each differing in tone; two French horns, similarly circumstanced; a clarionet that shrieked like a perturbed spirit; an oboe, with tones exactly similar to those produced by a schoolboy from a pocket-comb; and a bassoon, the sounds of which were like the growl of a polar bear with the stomachache. An overture began the evening's entertainment. In the execution of this composition there was no slavish adherence to old-fashioned rules. All those threadbare notions about time and tune were scouted as antediluvian. Time really appeared to them a matter of moment, for every bar was passed over with the rapidity of a steeple-chase. It seemed as if each performer was trying to get first to the conclusion. Now the second fiddle was ahead; —he was soon passed by two of the flutes, closely followed by the clarionet and violoncello, and fiercely pursued by the rest of the band, the French horns bringing up the rear. At one time, to use a sporting expression, they lay so closely together that you might have covered them with a table-cloth; but as the heat was a long one, symptoms of exhaustion were exhibited by several. Two of the violins 'bolted'; the oboe refused to take a leap—I mean a passage, and would not proceed further; the bassoon broke

down for want of breath ; the first fiddle and the last half-dozen flutes were completely thrown out, and the French horns gave up in despair. I would have offered at one period ten to one upon the flute in advance, but towards the end he began to flag ; and although he pushed along at a frightful pace, he was so closely pressed by the violoncello and clarionet, that I saw it was impossible for him to hold out. He was at last fairly ‘blown,’ and passed by the other two. It became a neck and neck race between the remaining pair. Each strained every nerve to reach the winning post ; and neither for some seconds gained or lost an inch. At last the wind instrument, when near the end of the course,—the overture I should say, ‘let out,’ (it was here slashing work,) and won by nearly half a head—I mean half a bar. Some judges proclaimed it a dead heat, but in my opinion the stringed instrument lost. A few of the regular ‘out and outs’ came straggling in two or three minutes after the winner ; the rest were completely *distanced.*”

“Really,” said I, with a laugh, “I must compliment you on your powers of description.”

“ You are too good,” he replied. “ Well, my dear sir, after this exquisite treat, which, of course, was honoured with ‘thunders of applause,’ a respectable gentlewoman, with a superabundance of false ringlets, and a naval officer, with a remarkably fine bald head, sung ‘Time has not thinned my flowing hair.’ Then two superannuated clerks from Lombard-street tuned their voices to ‘I know a bank ;’ after which a half-pay lieutenant, on the wrong side of fifty, who had been abusing the War Office all the evening, favoured the company with ‘A Soldier’s Gratitude.’ But the most charming of the vocal performances was executed by a young married lady who had figured some time since at Doctors’ Commons. She sang an air from a new oratorio, and it was entitled ‘A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband,’ with horn accompaniments. Other compositions of a similar nature, and heard under equally appropriate circumstances, followed, of which I have now no remembrance ; but I can assure you they were executed in a manner, until then, to me unknown.

“ Once, my dear sir, I was induced by curiosity to pay a visit to a place called a ‘house of call,’ where I heard concerts were given, for admission to which the price of two-

pence sterling was demanded. It was not a place where a person of my rank ought to have gone ; but I am a man of the world. After paying the fee, I was ushered into a large room, carpeted with brown sand, and filled with the most select company of the swell mob, the *beau monde* of the lower orders, seated on narrow benches around square tables of painted deal. Some, in all the shirtless majesty of independence, were ‘ blowing a cloud ;’ others, who appeared as if they considered smoking vulgar, thought proper to masticate the savoury weed ; and a numerous circle, who seemed as if they scorned *baccy* in any shape, patronised a popular liquid there called ‘ heavy wet.’ While the major part of the company were gratifying their *liquorish* propensities, others, more intellectually inclined, favoured the rest with the melody of their ‘ most sweet voices ;’ and I felt assured, as I gazed around me, that if the audience were not then *transported*, some of them very shortly would be. A few volunteer instrumental performers, and a concerto on the jews-harp; an obligato on the salt-box, and a fantasia, by a chin-chopper, were among the chief attractions of the evening. They were evidently performers of celebrity. Many of them were well known for the dexterity of their *fingering* ; and their *execution* will be answered for by a distinguished professor near the Old Bailey, whose performances ‘on one string’ have attracted more numerous audiences, and have hitherto been more effective, than those of Paganini.”

I had been in some degree amused by the humour of his conversation ; so, with a design to gain from him the particulars of his life, from which I expected to gain considerable entertainment, I invited the “man of the world” to breakfast with me at my hotel next morning. The invitation was gladly accepted ; and we parted with many professions of esteem on his part, and a few commonplace complimentary phrases on mine.

CHAPTER VII.

Dora awakens in my mind a desire to enter into political life.—“The man of the world” relates his history, in which he describes the blessings of single blessedness, and shows the advantages of a bad memory.—An incident.

WHEN I returned to my hotel I found a letter waiting for me from Dora. I opened it eagerly. It commenced thus :—

“Belgrave Square.

“DEAREST VINCENT,

“The occurrences of this eventful day have passed by like a dream, from which I am scarcely now awake. Yet they were all real. I cannot doubt the reality of your words and actions, nor their sincerity. Neither do I wish to hold them in my remembrance save as evidences of life and truth, to be cherished in the mind as the presence of a pure felicity ; and to be regarded, under all circumstances, and in all times, as the source of everything that is good and excellent—sacred, just, and exalted in human nature. My heart is brimming over with happiness. I have prayed fervently to the great Creator of all goodness to strengthen my spirit under the pressure of these accumulated prosperities ; for since you left me I scarcely know how I have existed. I have been in a delirium. I have lived out of the world. Such a state of being I think far more trying to our sinful natures than disappointment and adversity. In the latter, we feel our dependence, for we are placed at the mercy of circumstances. In the former, we are exalted above ourselves, and fancy that we are beyond the reach of every evil influence. While one obliges us to cling to religion as the only resource in the world’s abandonment, the other teaches us to rest all our love upon self, from a pleasing conviction that our happiness proceeds from our own meritoriousness. But I am prosing, and at such a time !

“How could you think of endeavouring to depreciate yourself in my eyes ? What use could there possibly be in

inventing such fables ? and to talk, too, in such a manner, to one who knows you so thoroughly ! If I could be angry with you I would ; however, I will forgive you, if you will promise not to repeat the offence.

" I have received a letter from my father, who states, that he will most probably be in town to-morrow. It is full of kindness to me—kindness that affects me the more, because I cannot consider myself worthy of it ; but what possessed in my eyes still greater attractions, it contained much that concerned you. You know that my father is a great politician, but I understand nothing of politics. This is partly my own fault ; for lately Lord Melcombe has taken a great deal of trouble to show me the importance of the constitution, and the utility of kings, lords, and commons ; and since I have been where I am, I have heard the Marquis of Brambleberry and his friends continually exclaim against the wickedness of a set of persons they call Whigs and Radicals. My father has now a great desire that you should represent the borough of Melcombe in Parliament. I have heard that the right of returning two members always belonged to our family ; but that the Reform Bill, which all papa's friends seem to regard, I suppose with justice, as a very iniquitous measure, took away that privilege, and gave one member only to the borough. At the last election, my father's candidate did not succeed, which has made papa very indignant at the ingratitude of the people. It seems that there is a probability of another election soon taking place, and he thinks that you would be sure to be returned. But he will explain these matters to you much better than I can. If you do make the attempt, which I sincerely hope you will, I shall be so proud to be near you to watch your progress, and encourage your exertions !

" Let me see you, if possible, some time to-morrow. I am going in the morning with Lady Brambleberry sight-seeing : I wish you would accompany us. Her ladyship speaks in the highest terms of your friend the foreign prince. Bring him with you : I am anxious to know and appreciate every person whom you may consider deserving your friendship. They are all very busy here, preparing for my *début* in the fashionable world. I think they make the subject of far more importance than in justice belongs to it ; but I am too happy to be dissatisfied with anything or anybody.

" You must excuse me, dear Vincent, for sending you so brief a letter, but the truth is, I dare not, at the present moment, trust my pen. If I do not now break off, I am sure that I shall write such nonsense, and so much of it, that you would avoid all future communications from me as you would the plague. To prevent so unsatisfactory a result, let me conclude at once with the assurance that I am,

" Your happy and devoted
DORA.

" P. S. Come early : I shall most anxiously expect you."

I must acknowledge that the affection evinced in this letter did not give me so much pleasure as my uncle's desire that I should represent the borough of Melcombe. I felt certain of my cousin's love ; but this conviction, such is the perversity of human nature, took away much of the interest with which I regarded the subject. Where there is doubt there will be anxiety to succeed ; but when success is assured, the anxiety is over. I do not deny that I felt gratified by observing the various proofs of sincere attachment with which she regarded me ; bad as I was in heart and soul, there were times when her goodness would awaken in me some evidence of a better nature. Now the new prospect that attracted me appealed to my ambition too powerfully to be neglected for thoughts of a tenderer nature. Love was sacrificed to politics. I could think of nothing but my promised constituents. I felt certain that, with the assistance of Mephistophiles, all the sources of power and greatness would be thrown open to my choice ; and I determined that I would attain such an elevation as would entitle me to the admiration of the present age, and the worship of posterity : some recompense, in my own opinion, for the fearful sacrifice I had made to procure them. My thoughts were all given to political greatness--to the certainty of becoming an orator and a statesman ; and when I fell asleep I dreamed at one moment that I was Cicero, in the next that I had become Demosthenes ; I was now a Tully, and then a Chatham ; but in whatever situation I was placed, Lady Julia always appeared near, rewarding my exertions with smiles of encouragement. So long did my visions continue, that when I entered the breakfast-room, I found Mephistophiles and Lord Sponge had commenced

their meal, after having waited for me an hour beyond my usual time.

My object in inviting "the man of the world" was to learn from him his history. This I stated to him, mentioning at the same time, the great interest I should feel in hearing a narrative, which, I had no doubt, would convey both amusement and instruction. Mephistophiles also expressed an extraordinary desire to be favoured with so important an autobiography as his lordship's must be ; and we both cajoled him till, amazingly delighted at the anxiety we were showing for him, he commenced.

" My dear sir, you are really too good. Your highness has conferred on me an honour I shall not quickly forget. My life has not been very eventful. I have no discoveries to make for the benefit of science ; nor have I met with any perils in 'the imminent deadly breach :' but since you kindly imagine my history affords matter of interest, I will, with extreme pleasure, relate to you the fullest particulars ; —I will thank you for a few slices of that Bologna. Perhaps the experience of 'a man of the world' like myself may be serviceable to you, as you are now just entering into the business of life. I shall be but too happy to afford you any service.

" My father was the honourable and reverend Dr. Puff, a younger son of a younger son of a recently created peer. He was rector of the parish of Tithingfield, where he generally resided, and held a vast number of livings, advowsons, and other holy offices within the neighbourhood of which he was never seen. Without intending such an atrocity as a pun, I think there was nothing singular in his being a pluralist. If he had not gained a living, he must have starved ; and the more sheep he had in his fold, the greater was the necessity to 'keep the wolf from the door.' Although it is true he never performed the duties of his sacred calling except in the parish where he dwelt, without a doubt he conferred a great favour on those he neglected ; for, as it was impossible for any person to be a worse guide than himself, a more worthy one invariably filled his place. I am afraid I shall scarcely be able to do justice to his good qualities. He was a man of wonderful powers of mind ; he could drink six bottles of wine, and afterward preach a sermon upon temperance ; and possessed exceeding activity

of body, for after running a fox to earth, he would do the same kind office for one of his parishioners. His charity was unabounded, for no one knew where it began or ended ; and his virtues must have exceeded all calculation, for no one ever attempted their enumeration. He was respected by all—the select vestry ; admired by all—the corporation ; and every member of the Tithingfield hunt considered him a d——d good fellow !” Fame could not have done more for him. He had received a superior education at one of the universities, but was not at all ostentatious in disclosing the extent of his acquirements. Perhaps he was wise in this ; and modesty under such circumstances is doubly meritorious. Of mathematics he knew enough to enable him in after life to make all things *square* in his own circle. He read Greek, he wrote Latin, divinity he studied deeply, and it appeared to some profit. In course of time he was made a D.D. ; for at college learning comes slowly, and a reputation is made by *degrees*. Although related to persons of rank, his allowance was very limited ; and it was expected that he would soon be able to do without assistance from his family, who were too poor to be of much service to him. My dear sir, another cup of chocolate.

“ Having performed some disinterested offices of kindness to a young marquis, the hopeful heir to a rich and powerful duke—such as doing for his lordship those college duties which his lordship had neither inclination nor ability to do for himself—the young nobleman had sufficient influence over his mamma to get my father engaged as his tutor. My respected parent and his right honourable pupil got on exceedingly well together. Books were thought by them both things perfectly unnecessary in a genteel education.”

“ ‘The proper study of mankind is man !’ exclaimed Dr. Puff, with becoming gravity, as he was finishing his third bottle of claret.

“ ‘The proper study of mankind is *woman* !’ replied his lordship, with youthful enthusiasm, as he opened a perfumed billet from the most amiable *figurante* in the world. It is almost unnecessary to say that there was no dispute upon the subject.

“ They set off together on the tour of Europe, and rattled past everything that deserved notice as fast as foreign post-horses could carry them. They drank champagne at Aix ;

hock by the Rhine ; ate maccaroni in Naples, and ortolans in Rome ; and returned to England with that wonderful knowledge of men and things, of foreign countries and people, which such advantages as they had enjoyed for observation, and such opportunities as they had made use of for investigation, must have enabled them to acquire. My father's pupil, being by this time thoroughly accomplished, no longer had occasion for a tutor. His lordship was deeply versed in the study of *liqueurs*—the hydrostatics of high life ; he was a proficient in the science of carving—the anatomy of the aristocracy ; natural history he was perfectly acquainted with—as far as dogs and horses were concerned ; and the calculations in his betting-book were sufficient evidence of his familiarity with figures. In knowledge of the fine arts, the marquis could scarcely have found a superior among persons of his own rank ; for he had seen the *Louvre*, and walked through the *Vatican*. What more could be wanted to constitute a connoisseur ? His acquaintance with music was evinced in the readiness with which he could distinguish one opera from another. Could a greater degree of knowledge be required from one of the *dilettanti*? Yet, strange as it may appear, his lordship possessed other accomplishments. He was a capital hand at billiards ; *au fait* at all games of chance, from *rouge et noir* to 'chuck-farthing' ; knew how to manage a yacht better than any of his club ; and was a dead hit at a reasonable distance with the pistol or the fowling-piece. It must, therefore, be apparent to you that my respected parent could be of no further service to so highly gifted a nobleman. He was dismissed, presented by his noble patron with the rectory of Tithingfield, as a reward for the great exertions he had made in perfecting the education of his son, and shortly after commenced his clerical labours.

" But my father's ambition was not so easily satisfied. He continually felt a most praiseworthy desire to become a bishop. The uncle of his late pupil was then at the head of the administration, so he wrote a long pamphlet to prove the perfection of the constitution, and the excellence of his lordship's government. I believe there is not a copy of this inestimable work in existence ; indeed, shortly after its publication it became so very popular, that respectable tradesmen would purchase it by weight for the purpose of wrap-

ping up the articles in which they dealt. The writer was rewarded with a rich living in the gift of the crown. He put forth similar manifestations of his patriotism, and met with similar examples of ministerial generosity. The lawn sleeves appeared near at hand. He began to study the list of bishops, to inquire after those who were asthmatical, or were likely to be visited with the gout in their stomachs, and to cultivate the acquaintance of his noble relative.

"Dr. Puff had lived a bachelor till he was weary of so solitary a state of existence. His thoughts became matrimonially inclined. In due course of time he met with a lady every way qualified to become an excellent sleeping partner in his establishment. Miss Lucretia Lovepoodle was a maiden lady not very young, but particularly proud. She was proud of being descended from Charles the Second, whose royal character she looked upon with profound respect. Crowned heads she reverenced in her heart, and everything connected with regal dignity was held sacred in her eyes. As her cousin at that time filled the important and honourable situation of one of the maids of honour to the queen, or to the king, I am not certain which, she thought herself obliged to observe all the forms of court etiquette with the most rigid punctuality. My father calling upon her one morning found her arrayed in deep mourning, and seemingly in the very depth of affliction. He had heard of no death in the family, therefore was quite unconscious of the cause of her tears. But Dr. Puff was never at a loss for words on such an occasion. He screwed up his features to as lugubrious an expression as they were capable of producing; spoke of the necessity of being resigned; attempted to console her for her loss, and ventured to inquire in the most soothing manner into the cause of her affliction. Taking her cambric handkerchief, trimmed with lace, from a face in which the tears came streaming down as large as any crystal drops on the cheek of the heroine of a modern romance, in a trembling voice and with a heart-broken look she exclaimed,—'Oh! Dr. Puff, we've lost one of the Bourbons!'

Mephistophiles and I laughed.

"A person who could feel so much generous sympathy for a stranger must, my father thought, make an affectionate wife; and as she possessed those sterling recommendations

that are generally thought necessary to secure happiness in the married state—was well related and respectably accomplished—he lost no time in proposing for her hand. Now Miss Lucretia was of a certain age ; that is to say, it was certainly between thirty and fifty ; but whether it approximated nearest to the former or to the latter no one but herself, and the parish register, could tell ; therefore she looked upon the honourable and reverend Dr. Puff, not only as a pillar of orthodoxy, and a champion of the right divine of kings, but also as a gentleman willing to make her change the questionable utility of old maidenhood for the more enviable situation of a married woman. They were united in wedlock, and I was the first and only fruit of their nuptial felicity."

Mephistophiles congratulated "the man of the world" on the respectability of his parentage.

"Ah ! your highness flatters," he replied. "I remember little in my infancy worthy of being related. My mother was excessively fond of me. She caressed me, I believe, for the same reason that she fondled her spaniel—for being of the true King Charles's breed ; and I always showed myself sensible of her fondness—when I thought I could get anything by it. In due time I was sent to a public school. On that occasion the parting with my family was most affecting. My mother was literally drowned with grief ; and my father, as he handed me into the chaise, gave me a lecture on obedience to teachers, to which I listened with the most filial attention—bawling so vociferously all the time that it was impossible for him or any one else to hear a word he uttered ; my mother wiped my eyes, kissed my cheeks, and put a huge plum cake into my hands.

"Although everything at first did not appear in the most agreeable light in the new sphere of action into which I had been introduced, it was astonishing how soon I was reconciled to my new situation. In a short time I grew quite a model for persecuted *fags*. I made my superior's bed and brushed his shoes with the patient submission of a saint ; I endured at his hands cudgellings innumerable, with the uncomplaining spirit of a martyr ; and I devoured the adipose portions of animal food which he did not choose to eat with a *goût* worthy of a Lapland epicure. I attached myself to those boys whose parents were of the highest rank, and I en-

deavoured to make myself useful to them in a thousand different ways. Boys are sent to a public school to form a connection, and I determined so good an opportunity for making powerful friends should not be lost. The youth for whom I fagged was a young nobleman. I considered that when I was kicked by him I was honoured with an especial proof of his lordship's regard. If he knocked me down, I thought it a striking manifestation of his good-will; and if he took from me the nice things my mother was in the habit of sending, I received the fragments he restored as the most convincing evidence of his generosity. This conduct had the effect I designed. When my fagging was over, I found that my services were in continual requisition. The more influential boys discovered that I could do many things that no other boy could or would do. I know that this rule is always to be relied on—whenever you desire to gain the influence of some person of superior rank, show him that you can be of use to him,—no matter in what way your services may be required, if you can be useful you will be rewarded."

I acquiesced in the excellence of this principle.

"From school I went to college, where I was distinguished by the same willingness to do justice to the merits of my superiors, and this virtue made me generally admired by them. I was always an associate in their festivals, and the confidant in their indiscretions. At the university I soon became deeply impressed with a veneration for those ancient seats of learning which surrounded me. Every thing seemed to breathe of wisdom. The very walls assumed an air of sagacity similar to the looks of the professors; and the difference between a post and a proctor was for a long time scarcely discernible. My father intended me for the church, and I have no doubt that I should have become in time a most excellent divine."

"There cannot be a doubt of it," remarked Mephistopheles, with assumed gravity.

"You do me honour. However, I was not at college a sufficient time to derive much benefit either moral or intellectual. My discoveries in science and acquirements in learning were confined to some successful experiments to prove the fragility of glass, in which I broke the master's windows, and in ascertaining at what taverns the prettiest

barmaids were kept ; in which inquiry one of them knocked me down with the bootjack. I was recalled from these interesting studies on a most pressing emergency. My father, in one of his clerical duties, (leaping a five-barred gate,) found that his own inclination for lofty flights was not shared by his horse. As the result was fatal to both, it may be said that they were 'in at the death' sooner than either expected : but peace to their *manes* ! It was quite absurd of my father to die just at that time ; for the very week after one of the bench of bishops expired of apoplexy. While attending my father's funeral, it was a great gratification to my filial feelings to see the *pleasure* with which the parishioners thronged to do honour to the remains of their late pastor. The poor seemed as if they had longed to have such an opportunity of paying their respects to the deceased, and evidently were kind enough to think heaven the best place for him. The corporation were in affliction, the hunt in despair ; and the select vestry, after demolishing all 'the funeral baked meats' provided for the melancholy occasion, got as drunk as lords in devotion to his memory, and—charged the expense to the poor-rates."

"Really," said I, with a smile, "the popularity of your respected parent was extraordinary."

"Indeed it was," he replied. "My mother was unprepared for this sad catastrophe : she appeared inconsolable. So great had been her felicity in the marriage state, and so complete the happiness she had enjoyed in my father's lifetime, that she fancied she could not better exhibit her satisfaction of matrimony, and her affection for her late husband, than by shortening as much as possible her period of widowhood ; therefore, in a very short time after his decease, she married again. Mr. Wheedle, a lawyer, who had the reputation of being a clever man in his profession, was employed by her to arrange my father's affairs ; and so satisfactory was his arrangement, that he soon possessed the whole of the property and the widow into the bargain. I had learned no profession—no provision was made for me—I was a beggar without a sixpence in the world. These disagreeable truths my father-in-law, in the first week of his paternity, hinted to me in the most delicate manner possible, and generously offered to take me into his office to teach me the art and mystery of that noble profession, of which he

acknowledged himself (with more truth than sincerity) an unworthy member, and promised that he would put me in the way of 'doing for myself'; and, as I afterward found out, for other people at the same time. I could not help being penetrated with feelings of gratitude for so noble an offer, and accepted it. Here was a situation for the companion of young noblemen! The son of a bishop in perspective—the twentieth cousin of a peer of the realm a junior clerk to Mr. Wheedle! I felt degraded, but did not despair. I determined to wait and take advantage of circumstances. It was not impossible for an attorney's clerk to become lord chancellor. 'A man of the world' should never be cast down by unfavourable events, and I acted upon that philosophy.

"I commenced my initiation into the profound mysteries of the law. I copied indentures, agreements, wills, and leases, in that delightful language which can be interpreted any way to suit any purpose. I read a vast number of books, written in so pleasant a manner that my memory was never afterward burdened with their contents; and then I began to see into the real nature of things. I observed that what men commonly call justice has not the most remote connection with the thing we call law; and that right and wrong change places as often as partners in a country-dance;—that it is better for people who differ upon any subject to let the law adjust their disputes, than to settle them amicably without such assistance;—that law, being a luxury, should be paid for extravagantly, that the world might appreciate its value;—that a cause, like a circle, has neither beginning nor end; and that it is the duty of the lawyer to convince his client that, whatever his case may be, in all instances it must be the best. I kept studying these noble truths diligently for some time, in the hope that a favourable change would occur in my prospects, and make my way of life more in accordance with my own wishes. I made myself as useful as possible to Mr. Wheedle, but he did not appear to appreciate my services. It so happened that, by a series of unforeseen accidents which occur only upon extraordinary occasions, I found myself heir-presumptive to the barony of Sponge. Several of my cousins, in the most friendly manner, left this world for a better. The youngest were pleased to take the measles; the eldest was so oblig-

ing as to patronise the cholera. One was good enough to be shot in a duel ; a second favoured me by breaking his neck in a steeple-chase ; and the third laid me under a thousand obligations by condescending to get drowned in the Isis.

" A complete and immediate change in my existence took place. I became a different being. My mother was beside herself with joy. The idea that her son would become a lord seemed too much for her reason : it became slightly overbalanced ; and a powerful dose of a particular cordial she took occasionally, (merely as a medicine,) instead of securing its equilibrium, upset it altogether. My father-in-law, as soon as he was made aware of the good news, called me out of the office into the best parlour, before I was aware of what had occurred ; and instead of lecturing me, as I expected, for some fault committed, Mr. Wheedle shook me by the hand with a cordiality to which I had hitherto been a stranger, looked the concentration of disinterested kindness ; told me how shocked he was at seeing a person of my ability and rank performing the drudgery of his office, and inquired whether I should prefer returning to college, or taking the tour of Europe in the company of a tutor. I was bewildered. I had not the least conception of what it all meant. I stared till I could not see out of my eyes. Then he assured me that all he possessed was at my disposal ; said how proud he was of the honour of being of service to me, and vowed, with something like tears in his eyes, that he should ever bless the day that united him to the mother of the future Lord Sponge.

" I proceeded on the grand tour with a companion who agreed to favour me with the benefit of his advice and erudition for certain equivalents. The advice was never offered for fear of giving offence ; and the learning was not produced because it was not in his possession. I was allowed to do just as I pleased ; and you may depend upon it I made good use of the privilege. I travelled over various parts of the Continent, but made the longest stay in Paris. Here I lived expensively, played deeply, and enjoyed existence as a man of the world ought to enjoy it. I then proceeded to London, and took a distinguished part in the world of fashion. Mr. Wheedle produced the means of defraying some portion of my expenses, upon the agreement that I

should merely allow him fifty per cent. when I came in possession of the title and property, until he had nothing more to produce ; and his creditors, finding that their demands were only to be paid by promises, made a scramble at him and his effects, and got what they could. My mother did not long survive the forfeiture of her property ; and my father-in-law, vexed that his clients deserted him, and his friends abandoned him, in a fit of temporary derangement hanged himself with a piece of red tape.

"I was not much troubled with these circumstances, as may be imagined. A man of the world knows that people must die at some time or other, and to him it ought to be immaterial when the event takes place. Besides, I found many good-natured people who were willing to lend me any sum I wanted at a rate of interest much less than that required by my excellent father-in-law. Nothing could surpass the attention with which I was treated by all the mammas who had marriageable daughters at their disposal. I was introduced to Lady Janes and Lady Marys out of number ; and I found that after I had danced with them a quadrille or two, I had proceeded marvellously well towards their good opinion, considering the shortness of our acquaintance. I soon became a man of *ton*, entered into the most exclusive society, and was *feted* and feasted wherever I went. I was invited to the best dinners, every box at the opera flew open at my approach ; and there was not a ball given considered perfect unless graced with my presence."

"But did you exist all this time," said I, "without forming any affair of a tender character?"

"Quite the reverse," he replied. "Few men, my dear sir, have possessed the opportunities I enjoyed for cultivating *la belle passion*. I have been continually engaged in some *liaison*. But to a man of the world these sort of things come as a matter of course. Women were created to be adored, and the more deities you worship the more likely you are to acquire a good name. My reputation by the sex has been exalted beyond the possibility of a fall. I have twice appeared in cases of breach of promise, and thrice as defendant in crim. cons."

"You have immortalized yourself!" exclaimed Mephistopheles.

"It gives me pleasure to hear you say so," said the noble parasite. "But, besides these, I have made conquests innumerable. In early life I was distinguished from the herd by extraordinary powers of persuasion. Mr. Wheedle, who was famed for conversational eloquence, always asserted that I could talk a person into believing anything. He seldom flattered—when there was nothing to get by it. It may be believed, that when I left his house there was considerable regret among the young females in the neighbourhood. In fact, so much was I respected, that I have been assured that they lament to this hour my untoward departure. In town I was not less successful than I had been in the country. I now began to think of matrimony. But I found it impossible to make up my mind to prefer one individual from the amiable throng by which I was surrounded. I was in a Mohammedan's paradise, and knew not which of the fair divinities to choose; I therefore gave my attentions wherever there was sufficient rank, wealth, or beauty to attract. I thought at times my choice was hovering between the honourable Miss Amelia Tartuffe and Lady Augusta Hawk. Amelia was a miracle of beauty; and her mamma told me, in confidence, was one of the most amiable creatures in the world—she spent a fortune in charitable purposes. Augusta was neither less lovely nor less amiable, if I might be allowed to judge from the assertions of her aunt, who really regarded me with a most parental solicitude. Then Miss Tartuffe played on the harp as brilliantly as Bochsa; and Lady Hawk possessed a voice whose sweetness equalled Grisi's. The mamma of the one arranged the most splendid *soirées*, and the papa of the other gave the best dinners of the season. What was to be done where a choice was so difficult to make?"

"Rather a difficult position, even for a man of the world like yourself," I remarked.

"True, my dear sir, true," he replied. "It was a situation of some difficulty. I could only be equally attentive to both, without compromising myself with either. When they took their stalls in the 'charity bazaars,' I bought the goods from the fair traffickers at equally exorbitant prices. I turned over the leaves of Miss Amelia's music-book when she played, and accompanied Lady Augusta on the German flute when she sung. I complimented the papa of one on

the genius of his French cook, and said a thousand pretty things to the mamma of the other in commendation of her last *déjeuner à la fourchette*. There was also a young marchioness whom I fancied I might possess with a little trouble ; and I was on the most intimate terms with all the unendowed daughters of the *beau monde*. The fact was, that, as the honourable Flexible Puff, the heir to a rich peerage, I became of as much importance as a sovereign prince in his own dominions. Few can imagine the homage paid to a marrying man of good fortune and family when he enters the higher classes of society. Provided he is handsome, and possesses a proper share of tact, he will almost be allowed to do as he pleases. I fancy that I was not deficient in these requisites," continued his lordship, with an air of extraordinary self-sufficiency. "I was courted by all, and flattered all in return. Flattery is a delightful essence, the flavour of which is universally appreciated. I have frequently brought it into requisition, and never found it unpalatable to the most fastidious taste."

"To be successful in its effects," observed Mephistophiles, "three things should be considered—the time, the patient, and the dose."

"Exactly so," replied the man of the world. "Your highness speaks like a philosopher. It is agreeable to all ; but it requires a nice experience and an exquisite tact to discover the proper occasion and quantity."

"The world is full of lies ; but none are so highly prized as those which pamper its own vanity," exclaimed the fictitious prince, with a fierceness that formed a part of his true character.

"A little too severe there," observed his lordship : "but to return. The season drew to a close, and left me undecided as to my intentions. Then I had a hundred invitations showered upon me from all directions to pay visits in the country. One wanted me to hunt in Leicestershire—another desired the pleasure of my society to shoot grouse in the Highlands—a third wished me to kill his pheasants ; and the young ladies backed the invitations of their male relatives by requesting my society and counsel for a variety of purposes, all irresistibly attractive, and impossible to be refused by any one professing pretensions to gallantry. I therefore joined the bounds with the honourable Miss Ame-

lia Tartuffe's brother, and nearly broke my neck by a stumble of my horse in leaping a quickset hedge. I accompanied Lady Augusta Hawk's papa on a shooting excursion among the Scottish mountaine, and was saved from being precipitated into the black waters of a rascally loch, after a desperate tumble ; and I participated in the pleasures of a *battue* under the direction of the Duke of Gamewell, the guardian of the marchioness, and escaped by a miracle from being shot by my short-sighted friend, who mistook the fur cap I wore for a pheasant rising on the wing, and let fly at me with both barrels before I had time to say, Jack Robinson ! Dukes are not obliged to be good shots, otherwise I should not now be relating my history."

I congratulated him on his good fortune.

" Yet I had far greater perils than these to encounter. I accompanied Amelia in her rides, and had to stand the witcheries of her dark eyes and laughing smiles. I had evidently made great progress in her affections, and enjoyed sufficient opportunities of making a declaration ; but I happened, by accident, to overhear a conversation between Miss Tartuffe and her confidant, in which I discovered that I had been grossly deceived, both as to her character and expectations. She was evidently neither so amiable nor so wealthy as I had been led to imagine. From Leicestershire I went to Scotland, and stood in imminent danger from Lady Augusta's expressive looks and melodious voice. Her ladyship was my guide to the most romantic spots in the neighbourhood. She related their legends, and explained their history to me ; and gave abundant evidence that I was likely to be her accepted if I chose to propose. I was about to sacrifice my liberty, when I ascertained that all her fortune was embarked in a speculation that had entirely failed. It would never do for a man of the world to marry a woman without a fortune. I proceeded to the marchioness. Here I was in the greatest danger of all. We read Petrarch together, and I was obliged to write sentimental sonnets in her ladyship's album. I should certainly have been en-chained, had she not, the very day I designed to make her a proposal, started off to Gretna with a tall Irish ensign, whom she had seen for the first time only a week before.

" At last I got married. I was obliged to do so ; for the late Lord Spongo was an obstinate old man, who would not

die when he was required. My creditors became impatient; and I led to the hymeneal altar, as it is called, Miss Angelica Bags, the only daughter of a deceased stock-broker, with whom I received a fortune of forty thousand pounds. I immediately perceived a complete revolution in the gay world as far as I was concerned. From a person of first-rate importance I sunk to nothing. The honourable Flexible Puff, while unmarried, was everybody—when married, nobody. The best dinners, the most splendid *fêtes*, went off with *éclat* without my presence being required. Few persons sent me any invitations of consequence during the season; and at its conclusion I was neither asked to Leicestershire, to Scotland, nor to his grace's *battue*. The female leaders of fashion, with marriageable daughters, who were once my most particular friends, afterward passed me by in the park with the most contemptuous indifference; and if at the opera I attempted to enter a box which, a few weeks previous, flew open at my approach, I received looks cold enough to freeze me into an icicle: such are the advantages I sacrificed by my matrimonial connection. ‘Single blessedness’ is an apt term for a bachelor’s enjoyment, but nuptial felicity is a mere matter of moonshine!”

“*Honeymoon-shine*,” I observed.

“Good! extremely good!” exclaimed the smiling sycophant. “I had not been married a month before I found that my Angelica possessed a very rickety constitution. I had not married her for her beauty. To a man of the world mere personal attraction has little charm of itself, but forty thousand pounds will create an angel out of a fright. Very shortly my wife sickened. Something wrong appeared about every joint in her body; but as her *jointure* was perfectly good, I thought I had no reason to complain. Soon afterward she died. I honoured her memory with a fine monument in a fine church, with a long epitaph describing her innumerable virtues. I entered again into the gay world; sported, intrigued, gambled, and dashed about with more spirit than ever. Somehow my wife’s fortune seemed to inherit the seeds of dissolution from its late possessor. It went into a rapid consumption. Soon after it had given up the ghost, and I was obliged to live as many men of superior talents do, by my wits, my obstinate old relative ‘shuffled off this mortal coil,’ and I became the

owner of the title and property of the barony of Sponge. Alas ! the gift, when it did come, was of little service. The rank I acquired to be sure was something, but the fortune was nothing. The late lord had amassed a large income, first as a leading barrister, then as a judge. After he had been promoted to the peerage, in an evil hour he sunk all his gains in a speculation for working a gold mine, which promised to make him the richest peer in the realm, and ended by making him the poorest. It is a pity that there is not some law to prevent avaricious old people from spending their money to the prejudice of their heirs. Since this disappointment I have been obliged to live in the best manner I could. But a man of the world is never at a loss. He has no prejudices, no false modesty, no useless pride, and he therefore finds a thousand resources where another is only left to despair. Gentlemen, my history is concluded. I am fearful it has given you but little entertainment, yet possibly it may afford lessons of instruction from which your highness, and you, my dear sir, and all young men of your ability, may reap great advantages."

"But your lordship has forgotten," said Mephistopheles, fixing upon him one of his most penetrating glances, "that little affair at Newmarket."

"Oh!" replied Sponge, with an easy laugh, "ha, ha, ha ! very good joke. You've heard that absurd affair ! Why, the jockey-club dared to expel me from their society because somebody had played some tricks with a horse. Capital thing that ! Excellent, by Jove !"

"And you do not seem to remember," continued Mephistopheles, "that trifling occurrence at the 'Star and Garter' at Richmond."

"Ah ! your highness means, no doubt, my winning twenty thousand pounds in one evening at unlimited loo from young Greenfinch," replied the man of the world, with admirable *nonchalance*. "A mere bagatelle. His friends made a great fuss, so I returned the money. It was a voluntary act, I assure you ; although many ill-natured people have reported that I was forced to do so in consequence of threats of prosecution, and all that sort of thing. Quite ridiculous."

"But why did not your lordship relate the particulars of your treaty with Mr. Simple concerning the place under

government, which he gave you nine hundred pounds to procure for him ?" inquired his tormentor, with the utmost civility.

" Oh, that's an every-day affair !" exclaimed his lordship, with the same quiet indifference. " We all do those sort of things. Poor Simple fancied I had interest with the government, and presented me with a douceur to use it in his behalf. I tried all I could to be of service to him, but could not get him a place. The ungrateful vagabond brought an action, put me in the papers, and made the transaction appear in a very different light from what it really was. Ignorant people abused me. But a man of the world is always above the malice of public opinion."

" True !" observed Mephistophiles, gravely, drawing his chair nearer to Sponge, and regarding him with an expression of the utmost affection ; " you are a man of genius ; a real philosopher ; I feel a sincere interest for you."

" Your highness does me too much honour," exclaimed the noble parasite, apparently much gratified.

" Yet I have been told some very extraordinary things concerning the resources by which you, as a man of the world, think proper to support your rank and station in society," continued the fictitious prince. His lordship looked puzzled. " People do say that you are a swindler, a toad-eater, and a blackleg." His lordship appeared offended. " But in my opinion those titles are only other words for meaning that you are accomplished, eloquent, and ingenious." His lordship smiled. " I have heard that your lordship's success at play is solely occasioned by your employing such arts as by stupid persons are considered unfair to use ; nay," continued his tormentor, advancing still nearer his victim, regardless of his frowns and confusion, " they even have the audacity to assert that you carry in one sleeve the choicest cards of the pack, and in the other loaded dice."

The man of the world seemed quite confounded at this accusation. He looked bewildered and frightened. He tried to laugh ; but a more hysterical attempt at mirth was never made. His face grew white, and then red, and he fidgeted about on his chair as if his position was exceedingly uncomfortable.

" I assure your highness it is an impudent fabrication,"

at last stuttered his lordship. "Not a word of truth in it, 'pon honour. I carry cards! I use false dice! 'Tis a base falsehood."

The words had scarcely escaped from his lips when I observed a number of kings, queens, knaves, and aces come tumbling out of the sleeve of his coat; while at the same time fell a pair of dice, which broke in their fall, and disclosed the lead with which they were lined. The man of the world started up from his chair in an agony of fear, gazed for one moment at the evidence of his guilt, then at me, then at Mephistopheles, with his mouth wide open, and his eyes staring out of his head; then, without thinking of his hat, he made one spring to the door, by which one of the servants was entering, upset the man, ran down-stairs, and was at the end of the street before another second had elapsed.

BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER L

Mephistopheles offers to assist me in my desire for political greatness, and advises me to become an author.—We accompany Dora and her aunt on a visit to Westminster Abbey.—Mephistopheles's opinion on immortality and other matters, and what took place in Henry the Seventh's Chapel.

WHEN our laughter at the sudden exit of the man of the world had subsided, I commenced acquainting Mephistopheles with the purport of Dora's letter.

"I know what you would say," said he, interrupting me before I had expressed a sentence. "Your uncle is on the road to town. He wishes you to canvass the borough that once was his. You are desirous of making a figure in the political world. Be satisfied. I am the slave of your wishes. More than the wildest aspirations of your ambition can picture I will realize."

I was about venturing upon an acknowledgment of his services, when he again interrupted me with something like an appearance of scorn.

"Nay, no thanks. They are lost upon me. When I have completed all your desires, possibly your approval may be given ; most probably it will be refused ; and quite as certain am I it will not be required. Gratitude is a thing I never look for in my transactions with mankind, therefore I cannot be disappointed at its non-appearance. I have promised to indulge you in all your wishes, and you will always find me ready to fulfil my promises. But really, men are so reasonable in their requests, that it is quite a gratification to serve them. If I might be allowed to make a suggestion, I should say it would do you service at the present moment were you to exhibit the great talents you undoubtedly possess. This is best done by publishing some work. As this is called 'the age of intellect,' every one is expected to write ; and the development of folly which this universal scribbling occasions is beyond all parallel. We have had the age of gold, the age of iron, and the age of brass ; we have now come to the era of pen, ink, and paper. Take up your goose quill, then, and do something. As good as any thing will be a fashionable novel. Let your hero be half a blackguard, a thorough profligate, and a complete puppy. Entitle your book 'The Portraiture of a Perfect Gentleman.' For fear your readers should pass your best things without regarding their excellence, place them in a different type. Deal as much in commonplace aphorisms as you can ; use the antithesis liberally ; be sufficiently epigrammatic. Never mind if your sense is obscure, or even if there be none at all ; if you can show a little point, make a bit of a shine, and manufacture harmonious periods, you will immediately get the fame of a pretty writer. This kaleidescope style of writing is at present very fashionable. By proper arrangement a few gewgaws will make a splendid show, and the novel-reader will be in ecstasies, the critics wonder, and the vulgar stare. Or, perhaps, you may prefer being a poet. If so, you must be like Solomon Hodges, the banker, rich enough to have your book of poems stuffed full of pretty pictures ; then your work will be considered an ornament to any library—especially the engravings. But whatever you do, endeavour to

do something extraordinary. You have a reputation to make ; and fame is most easily acquired by something eccentric, wonderful, or unnatural. Commence with differing from all men, and soon all men will agree with you in opinion. Human nature is so easily imposed upon that nothing is too impossible for its belief, nothing too absurd for its admiration, and nothing too extravagant for its worship."

I thought these suggestions worth consideration, and resolved to follow them with as little delay as possible. My mind was bent upon being the idol of my fellow-men ; and I determined on making use of every means which should raise me in popular estimation. How proud a situation, I fancied, holds the man upon whom the eyes of the vast world are fixed in admiration and wonder ! With what deep interest they watch his most trifling proceedings ! How eagerly they scrutinize his thoughts and sayings ! His friends are their friends, and his enemies immortalized in their enmity. Living, his faults die from him as unprofitable branches perish from a vigorous tree ; and dead, his virtues live in the remembrance of all generations,—as a mighty river, that the more it enlarges its current the farther it flows from its source. I yearned to become that man. I panted for that universal distinction. To gain this desire I felt I could risk anything, trample on established usage, and crush all natural prejudices that lay in my way.

Mephistophiles and myself accompanied Dora and the marchioness in her carriage for the purpose of visiting some of the least vulgar of the "lions" of the metropolis. As soon as Dora was introduced to the fictitious prince—as soon, in fact, as she caught the first glimpse of his face—she shrunk from him with an expression in her features of fear and horror, impossible to be described. Mephistophiles did not appear to perceive this indication of dislike. He seemed too intent upon paying some sarcastic compliments to Lady Brambleberry ; and her ladyship, all smiles and conversation, was so gratified with his flatteries that she took pains to make herself more than usually agreeable to all. Dora kept close to me almost the whole of the time we were together. Although she tried to conceal her aversion for my companion, I had studied her features too long not to be able to read the terror and anxiety there expressed. While regarding me, her looks were full of devo-

tion and tenderness. Smiles, like sunbeams, illuminated her beauty; and then the rich lustre of her dove-like eyes was momentarily dimmed by the effusion of unbidden tears —tears of inexpressible joy. But when her gaze turned towards Mephistophiles, it underwent a sudden and most complete change. That she had any suspicion of his real nature I doubted. His representation of the German prince would, I felt certain, deceive more experienced eyes than hers. Besides, I knew that she was not superstitious. The belief in the supernatural, of late years, had so entirely been destroyed in the minds of those who thought themselves superlatively wise, by the progress of modern philosophy, that any person in educated society would be ridiculed for adhering to the ancient credulity. Dora's strong sense of religion prevented her from believing in the existence of a spirit of evil assuming the person of a human creature. I felt assured the mystery of my fearful companion could not be penetrated by her. But how to account for her evident dread at first sight, and her continual uneasiness in his society, I knew not. I thought it strange.

We visited various places ; dioramas and panoramas ; exhibitions of different kinds ; wonders of every variety. In each Lady Brambleberry expressed her great delight, and Mephistophiles his unbounded contempt. The scornful opinions of the latter were only regarded by her ladyship as evidence of singularity ; a sign she never objected to in persons of high rank. The fictitious prince rose in her estimation as long as he scoffed at inferior things, as Whigs, Radicals, popularity, the vulgarity of the rich, and the ignorance of the poor ; and he knew too well her disposition to venture an attack upon Tories, or on the church, or on the constitution, in her hearing. Dora appeared gratified, and often regarded the things before her with pleasure and surprise. I remained by her side nearly the whole of the time we were together, and pointed out whatever was worthy her attention. My attentions were received with gratitude, and rewarded with smiles. She clung closer to my arm, looked up with more tenderness in my face, and seemed to forget that the world contained aught besides ourselves. I could not feel indifferent to a devotion which was in her as firm a principle of her nature as life itself, and occasionally I found myself regarding her with something resembling a

pure affectionate interest. At one time, while indulging myself in these sacred and sincere emotions, and giving up my heart to the influence of its better feelings, I suddenly observed the scorching gaze of Mephistophiles directed towards me with such an intense expression of scorn and derision, that I felt as if all good and holy sentiments within me were utterly annihilated.

Nothing appeared to give Dora so much gratification as our visit to Westminster Abbey. We were met at Poet's Corner by one of the ecclesiastics, with whom Lady Brambleberry was acquainted, and he paid particular and respectful attention to both ladies. He pointed out the monuments, he gave a sketch of the history of the building, and he related some amusing anecdotes of the early abbots. Dora listened with reverence, and regarded every portion of the venerable structure with feelings of profound awe. She gazed on the tombs of the heroic dead with a high and holy enthusiasm. She seemed to step with a prouder carriage as she paced near the imposing memorials of their greatness. But in that home of illustrious dust—that glorious temple of buried intellect—that sanctuary of English glory, so aptly designated Poet's CORNER—she lingered as if among old acquaintances. She gazed upon those statues as on the forms of familiar friends ; and read and reread their inscriptions as if they brought her tokens of a better world. And ever honoured be the monuments of those noble spirits who, shut out from the glittering vanities of the ungrateful world, fed their immortal natures with the pure food of heavenly inspiration ; and have so enriched mankind with the treasures of philosophy and thought—with the sweet dreams of poetry, and the grand truths of science—that the great world itself shall crumble and die into the vast chaos from whence it rose, sooner than the worth which it hath inherited from the accumulating dead shall be dissipated by ignorance, or rendered valueless by crime !

Mephistophiles and I were together ; the others were at some distance.

"And this is immortality !" exclaimed my companion, with a withering sneer, as he pointed to the tombs. "How worthy are the objects upon whom it has been conferred ! How illustrious the qualifications which have deserved it !

Here lies a twaddling versifier—there an obscene jester. In one place is found the shrine of a royal debauchée—in another stands the tomb of a popular play-actor. Our eyes are taken off the memorial that speaks of Newton's greatness, to gaze on the monument to ‘the carver in ordinary’ of that immaculate monarch Charles the Second. We see a rich profligate, who had the good fortune to be shot one Sunday in his chariot in Pall Mall, made to demand our attention equally with the incapable minister who had the ill luck to be murdered in a similar manner in the lobby of the House of Commons. Then, in the place where we expect to find a tablet to the memory of some good statesman (if there is such a thing) grown gray in the public service, we find one immortalizing a child of a ‘gentleman of the royal bedchamber!’ Rare immortality! The church has a capital picking from the dead. Six thousand pounds were given by Parliament for the purpose of erecting a monument to the memory of the Earl of Chatham, of which only the small sum of *seven hundred pounds* was demanded and paid for the permission of the right reverend mightinesses of the abbey, before it was placed in its present situation. But all this marble pageantry—these dusty banners—these lying inscriptions, what are they? the scenery, and decorations, and text of a farce acted by the dead for the benefit of the living. A farce! no, ‘tis not so good as a farce. ‘Tis a burlesque upon fame—a wretched libel upon time—a sorry pantomime of grave jokes, solemn tricks, and most lachrymose mummery.”

Here I heard Lady Brambleberry, as she stood near the monument of Fox, exclaim—

“ Why, I declare, here’s a monument to that shocking Whig; and so near that excellent Mr. Pitt, too! Really it’s quite a shame! The Whigs, and all such persons, should be buried by themselves. I’ve no notion of their thrusting themselves here. I’m sure Brambleberry would not like to be buried near Mr. Hume, or any of those low people; nay, I do not think that he would rest in his grave if he found himself in such neighbourhood; therefore I’m certain poor dear Mr. Pitt can’t feel comfortable.”

“ Bigotry would make distinctions in the grave,” observed Mephistopheles; “ but there are none. The grave is your true leveller—the worm your only conservative.

The one honours no distinction ; the other ‘does what he likes with his own.’ Death makes all men republicans. That dream of the living, ‘universal equality,’ is realized in the sleep of the dead. Honour be to the brave earth worm, though he be the representative of rottenness and corruption ! Let his deeds be glorified by man’s tongues, though he be signalized by his devotion to hole and corner doings. Is he not a rare friend to the church—a most conscientious pluralist ? And is not the church a famous caterer for his appetite—the very jackal of his banquet ? Then honour be to the brave earth worm, and glory to the levelling grave ; and a long life, and a merry one, to holy mother church herself ! But what a miserable vanity is all this laborious striving after immortality ? The end of monuments, and columns, and pyramids, and cities, is dust. The result of embalmments, and epitaphs, and inscriptions, and history, is oblivion. In the centre of the great desert, where the eye rests upon an interminable waste of arid sand, may be found a crumbling fragment of a shapeless mass of stone. Upon it, in characters almost illegible, may, with considerable difficulty, be traced the following words :—‘*I am Oxymandias the Magnificent. If you would seek traces of my greatness, look around ! admire and wonder ! This vast city, which hath no equal, I created !*’ Such is the immortality of man. The grave of the oriental Caesar, Nadir Shah, is cultivated with turnips. The clay of Alexander the Great has been baked into pots and pans ; and the mummy of the illustrious Pharaoh has been ground into paint. The hand that conquered the world may be kicked about on a dunghill ; and the flesh of the proud monarch may colour a cart wheel. Ay ! such is the boasted immortality of man !’

“ But is not this a fine moral lesson for the living ? ” said I. “ Does it not show the mere nothingness of renown, the very poverty of magnificence, and lead men’s minds from the contemplation of a perishable greatness to something of a higher and more durable excellence ? The truth it conveys may be humiliating, but wiser and better men have always looked upon it as a sure foundation for constructing an ascent that leads to heaven.”

“ Suppose it does convey a moral lesson,” remarked Mephistophiles, with his usual sarcastic manner ; “ how

profoundly the moral is regarded by those to whom the lesson is given! 'The conqueror speeds on his murderous career, seeking 'the bubble reputation.' His bubble is blown in blood. Never matter—it glistens in the sunbeam as brightly, and bursts in time's grasp as speedily as any other. Abuse not these lying inscriptions. Such forged recommendations to posterity are natural. Mankind want to be something better than they are. And when they cannot persuade themselves of their superiority, they attempt to impose on their successors, and cuddle themselves in the grave with the hope of being of vast importance by-and-by. The humiliating conviction, that from dirt they came, and to dirt they must return, is thrust aside for the more flattering belief, that they are made to crawl about the earth like caterpillars during the period of human life ; that they sink into a chrysalis state in the rotten wretchedness of the grave,—from which they are at some indefinite time to arise to a butterfly existence ; and then they will be allowed to sport their pretty wings among fadeless flowers and everlasting sunshine, to a blissful eternity, of which they never beheld the beginning, and are never to see the end. But this shrouding in sepulchral pomp is the passion of all men. That simple republican, or I should say, that glorious hypocrite, Oliver Cromwell, was buried with more than the splendour of kings. The walls of the chapel into which his body was consigned were hung with two hundred and forty escutcheons. The hearse was decorated with twenty-six large embossed shields, and twenty-four smaller ones, ornamented with crowns ; besides which, it contained sixty badges of his crest, and thirty-six scrolls, containing mottoes expressive of his merits. His effigies were magnificently carved, and arrayed with regal grandeur ; and over all was borne a sumptuous pall, made of eighty yards of the richest velvet. A short time after this *republican* display, his body was dragged from its sacred resting-place, and hanged upon a gallows at Tyburn, amid the rejoicings and execrations of the very people who had made him their idol."

"Monumental honours have their use, nevertheless," said I ; "they may sometimes be abused, and often bestowed upon undeserving objects, while merit is left to find a memorial where it may ; yet to see the statue over the honoured dust of the truly illustrious, is to have something which com-

municates to you a nearer and more living record of their worth than you can possess in the memory of their actions or the perusal of their thoughts. It brings you into a more endearing approximation to the presence of the living man ; and while we pay our heartfelt homage to departed merit, we feel as if surrounded with manifestations of existing excellence, breathing out of the corporal and intellectual similitude created by the skill of the statuary. I cannot gaze on these marmorean representatives of unrivalled genius —the sublime Milton—the all-mighty Shakspeare—the comprehensive Newton, without a feeling stealing over me of a more intimate communion with the undying spirit of exalted intelligence which emanated from the lives and works of that glorious triumvirate."

" Pshaw !" exclaimed Mephistophilès, contemptuously. " You give yourself up to the influence of prejudices, superstitions, idealities. The impressions you experience are created by the imagination. They are poetic fallacies, mental delusions. From a philosopher I expected better things."

A pause ensued in the conversation, during which we paced along one of the aisles in that antique and magnificent edifice.

" See here !" he continued in his usual sarcastic tone, pointing to different parts of the structure. " Look at these gigantic columns and lofty arches ! this show of Gothic grandeur ! What think you it was created for ? To make a *religious impression* ! The pious men of old knew well enough what *appearances* would do in their favour, so they cloaked up religion in mystery and splendour, and made its temples distinguished for grandeur and sublimity. The multitude worshipped in fear and awe ; and, what their spiritual advisers thought more to the purpose, paid well and willingly. Now the princely abbot and his lordly monks have given way to the little fat dean and their uglinesses the chapter. Instead of thronging worshippers, we find a few straggling cockneys led hither by curiosity ; and in place of the liberal offerings of the devout, gives with a prayer and rewarded with a blessing, a demand of fifteen pence each is made at the door by a growling cerberus there stationed ; which having paid, the party are hurried over the abbey under the direction of an ignorant guide, who, in the

tone and manner of a Bartlemy fair showman, points out ‘the lions,’ and then dismissing them with a growl, hastens to attend upon his next customers.”

The observations of Mephistophiles upon the wax figures, the Gothic ornaments, and several of the monumental designs, were delivered in a similar fierce and contemptuous spirit. He scoffed at all things. Images the most holy produced from him nothing but bitter sarcasms; and what others honoured with reverence, he distinguished with sneers. The influence of his example worked upon me with poisonous effect. I seemed to entertain the same sentiments. I walked along among the sanctuaries of so many generations without any better feeling than a vague and pleasurable curiosity.

We at last entered that unrivalled specimen of architectural magnificence, Henry the Seventh’s Chapel. The effect of its innumerable beauties upon the mind of Dora was instantaneous and extraordinary. She gazed with a wondering and devout awe. Her eyes wandered from place to place—from the picturesque octagonal buttresses to the rich and elegant vaulting—from the variegated tracery of the windows to the harmonious arrangement of the tessellated floor—from the pendants of solid stone hanging from the roof, covered with the rarest specimens of decorative sculpture, to the innumerable statues of angels, patriarchs, martyrs, saints, and confessors, ornamenting the nave and walls. The niches, with their profuse carvings, grotesque and elegant, upon the canopies, where the dragon, the greyhound, the rose, the fleur-de-lis, and a multitude of other shapes, seemed rising out of the stone—the light shafts of the arches—the banners and heraldic emblems of the knights of the Bath suspended from the walls—the elaborate decorations of the fretted roof—the wonderful carvings upon the oak stalls—the noble tomb of the founder—nothing seemed to escape her attention. That solemn feeling of devotion, likely to be created by the association of ideas, arising, in the mind of one religiously disposed, from the sacredness of the place, appeared to exert over her the deepest influence: she felt that she was sheltered within the temple of God.

Lady Brambleberry had no such feelings. With all her regard for the church, she was too much a woman of fash-

ion to feel any deep or lasting impression from spiritual things. She expressed her admiration of everything with ready eloquence and with fashionable indifference. She did not say that Henry the Seventh's Chapel would make a handsome ballroom ; but she thought so. Mephistopheles gazed on in scorn and contempt. At that moment the rich tones of the organ commenced spreading a peal of mighty harmony through the abbey, and the melodious voices of the choir came mingling with the sound, singing—

"Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end."

The effect was electric. Dora kneeled on the cold pavement, and, with outstretched hands and streaming eyes, poured out her soul in prayer, forgetful that aught but God was near her. Never did there appear so beautiful an incarnation of purity and piety. Lady Brambleberry put her handkerchief to her face, took out her smelling-bottle, and wrapped her Cashmere shawl closer round her. The ecclesiastic placed together the palms of his hands, and lifted up his eyes to the roof. I was not unmoved. I felt a deep reverential awe stealing over me ; but the good effect it would have produced was, in a great degree, destroyed by the attention with which I observed the actions of Mephistopheles.

He leaned against the stalls in a careless position, with his looks speaking the unutterable scorn of his heart. He shrouded his person in a large roquelaure which he wore on that occasion ; but though his limbs were concealed, his features were visible. Features!—oh God, what features ! There was then nothing human about them. His eyes were like caves of fire, glaring from under a sharp and narrow forehead, edged by thick and slanting eyebrows ;—his nose was beaked like the bill of a bird of prey, and from its wide nostrils breathed derision and malice ;—a sardonic smile of fiendish hatred dwelt around his blue and shrivelled lips—and his high cheek-bones, curved chin, and hollow jaws, were expressive of ferocity and contempt. His complexion was that of an Egyptian mummy, with tinges of a yellower colour where the light fell upon it ; and his wild hair floated in clouds of darkness round his demoniac face. On his head he wore a curiously embroidered cap, similar

in shape to those worn by the German students. A sort of fascination riveted my eyes upon him. I watched him in fear and horror. When the organ commenced, he appeared struggling with some superior power ; his face was distorted with convulsions ; his limbs trembled, as if with fear ; and as the voices sung "Glory be to the Father," I saw him, as if mastered by an invisible control, slowly bend his tall body in adoration. In this posture he remained while the music lasted. At its conclusion he returned to the perfect disguise of the German prince ; talked of the Holy Alliance to Lady Brambleberry, and quoted the fathers to the dean, till the former thought him the most agreeable man, and the latter considered him the most pious prince, in Christendom.

CHAPTER II.

A theatrical party—Mephistophiles' opinion of the present character of the British drama.—I am in love with the beautiful countess.—Our conversation upon authorship, poetry, love, and other matters equally interesting.

We dined together in Belgrave-square. The conversation was principally on the subject of my entering Parliament, and Lord Brambleberry favoured me with no inconsiderable quantity of advice concerning my parliamentary duties. I found the marquis a well-informed man ; yet shallow in his opinions, and bigoted in his principles. He possessed some of the frankness of the soldier, with more of his rashness. He was distinguished by a round, open face, surrounded with whiskers ; and a forehead not deficient in size, but rather wanting in intellectuality. Mephistophiles and he were shortly on excellent terms. They talked of mob orators, the similarity of atheism and radicalism, and the Peninsular war. They left me to the ladies. Shortly after dinner we proceeded to the theatre to a private box engaged for the occasion ; and as on our way there sufficient conversation appeared to be going on without my assistance, I employed my thoughts in selecting a subject

for a work of a peculiar character it was my intention to write. Before the carriage stopped I had arranged my materials, and sketched out a plot. Dora sat by me with her hand in mine, and seemed, by the attention with which she regarded my countenance, endeavouring to trace the purport of my thoughts.

The pieces for representation at this national theatre were the translation of a French farce played by English actors, and a French ballet, danced by French dancers. One was a humorous development of gross libertinism, and the other an elegant specimen of voluptuous sensuality. Captain Fitz-Grey entered our box. He was well known to Lady Brambleberry, and they were soon eloquently engaged in discussing the superiority of French actors, dramatists, dancers; in fact, of French everything. The marquis also made his appearance, and endeavoured to explain to Dora the merits of the entertainment. She did not appear to regard the performances or the conversation with much pleasure. Observing Lady Julia and her cousin opposite, whose party Fitz-Grey had left, I made a sign to Mephistophiles, and we both left the box without having been observed.

"How much the drama is degraded!" said I; "and is there so little native talent in the country, that we must import our farces from France?"

"Why, there is some dramatic capability," replied my companion; "yet your playwrights will work with foreign materials, and if they do not borrow they steal."

"And what has become of the moral of the theatre?" I inquired. "They used to aim at something of the kind. In the performances of this evening, however, such a thing does not appear to have been imagined."

"*Moral!*" exclaimed Mephistophiles with a laugh that roused the boxkeeper from his sleep; "who ever heard of morality in a theatre? Think you this gay saloon, and this crowd of beauties, were ever intended to forward the cause of morality? Do you imagine that the display of indelicacy on the stage we have just witnessed is calculated to improve the morals of the audience? Oh no! such effects are never dreamed of."

He was proceeding in a similar strain of well-merited censure, when we were interrupted by Sir Antler Taffrail.

"Ha, messmate! what cheer?" exclaimed the admiral, with his rude affectation of the seaman, as he held out his hand towards me. I gave him two fingers, and he shook them as if they had been a pump-handle. "By-the-by," he continued, "have you met in your cruise that damned privateer, Sponge? He's done me as clean as a cable. Wanted a couple of horses for my lady. His lordship recommended me two prime uns. Such sailors! Go like winking. Well, I gave an infernal high price for 'em; but in four-and-twenty hours the craft were discovered not seaworthy! Broken-winded—broken-legged—fit for nothing. If ever I come athwart his bawse, I'll pour such a broadside into his d——d carcass as shall sink his soul to Davy Jones in a jiffy! I should just like to know in what latitude he is skulking!"

"He started this morning by the packet for Calais," said Mephistophiles, laughing at this new specimen of talent from the man of the world. "He is most probably now on his road to Paris."

"Thank your highness. I'll trounce him for sailing under false colours, first time we meet," exclaimed Sir Antler. "But how does your highness like our theatres? If you should happen to wish to go behind the scenes to see the working of the vessel, I'll introduce you to the skipper, Mr. Pimp. Know him well."

"Much obliged to you, admiral," said I; "but both the prince and myself are already acquainted with Mr. Pimp, and do not desire a closer intimacy. Good-evening, Sir Antler!" and we bowed ourselves out of the admiral's vicinity.

As I entered the box, Lady Alderney welcomed me with one of her most winning smiles, and immediately began rallying me upon my visible attachment to my cousin. Mephistophiles drew off the attention of Lady Dimpleton by quizzing every person within sight; and the young lady was too much amused with her companion to listen to my conversation. I fancied, in spite of her raillery, that Lady Julia took a deeper interest in the affair than she was willing to acknowledge. I changed the subject. I told her my intention of becoming a candidate for my uncle's borough. She wished me success. I then hinted my desire

of attempting some literary production. She listened with greater pleasure.

"I am sure you have the ability to produce some work of lasting interest," she said, while her fine dark eyes appeared illuminated with a flood of intellectual light ; "but I would not advise you to give yourself up too much to the toil of composition. It is fortunate for you that you are not obliged to become an author. Few consider the lights and shadows of a scribbler's life, or the uncertainty of a literary existence. Poor Kirke White, and Chatterton, and Shelley, were cut off in the very bud of life ; and a thousand others have died early and unknown in the possession of the noblest faculties of human nature. A man of genius is like one of those bright-winged insects that sport in the sunshine of a summer's day, and then are seen no more. People wonder at the gladness and beauty they fling around the world ; but their surprise is as brief as the existence of the cause by which it was created. It is certain that many poets and philosophers have lived to a green old age. Godwin is more than eighty, and his mind still possesses most of the energies of his youth ; and Sir Walter Scott died at a period of life when death is generally expected. The same may be said of Goëthe, Coleridge, and a few other illustrious thinkers ; but their youth has been free from those trials that weigh down the heart to the dust. They have had no struggles. Their path has been covered with flowers, and their sky radiant with sunshine. One course of successful exertion, crowned with abundant patronage, has made their way easy, and their progress one of pleasure and happiness. They have enjoyed tranquillity of soul ; at least their spirits have been free from all those vexations that often render futile the exertions of many an aspiring mind. We are all liable to disappointment and to domestic affliction ; but I am convinced that there is nothing so trying to the man of intellect as those petty annoyances which arise from the want of a sufficient provision to render him independent of the world. The man who writes for bread considers his employment a degradation ; he is convinced that he is debasing powers given him for a wiser purpose ; he feels a sense of wrong, and he writes without that lofty ambition which confers on genius all those high and mighty impulses that are the first principles of its nature. When

I hear of the poverty of a man of genius, I consider it a national humiliation. You will escape the troubles of the poor man, but there are other evils which the rich man cannot avoid. There are jealousies and rivalries, and misrepresentations, from which none are free. There is no pursuit attended with so many disappointments and so few pleasures as that of literature, especially at the present time. You must look for your reward from the future, not from the present. Yet it is rather disheartening to find that those energies which you devote to the enlightenment of the living should be so little appreciated during their exercise ; but do not let me discourage you. I have great hopes of you. I feel a presentiment that you are destined to fill a distinguished station in society before you die ; and that, at your death, you will be honoured with the regrets of the whole civilized world."

"I have no doubt that I shall die some of these odd days," said I, with a smile ; "but with all my vanity, I doubt if the world will care a straw about the matter. That there are some individuals, who, 'when I have shuffled off this mortal coil,' may shed a tear on my *hic jacet* I verily believe ; but, in a short time, even those will have ceased to remember that such a being as myself was ever burdened with existence. I feel highly flattered by your kind sentiments, they are worthy of your own good and generous nature ; but you have fallen into a wondrous error in conceiving me to be a vast deal cleverer and of much greater importance than I am or ever shall be. However, your flattery will not spoil me ; it will only induce me to endeavour to deserve it. I believe I may be numbered among 'the illustrious obscure,' those wonderfully wise personages to whose extraordinary talents the world never feels inclined to do credit. It would be advisable to send my productions for your favourable criticism, for it is a pleasant thing for a poor devil of an abused author to turn round upon society and denounce them as a herd of ignoramuses, while he points to the flatteries of some partial friend as evidence of his neglected merit."

She did not appear quite pleased with the manner in which I took up the subject. She then spoke of the poets of the day. Praised them all, particularly Moore.

"Young ladies have been so completely fascinated with

the sweetness of Moore's versification," I remarked, "and the delicious character of his sentiments, that they never look deeper than the sugared crust of his poetry. His style is charming, I allow. I was once as much enraptured with it as you are ; I can still admire it ; but it does not possess that hold upon me which it used, and for this reason—his sentiments are those of romance, not of nature ; his poetry is a work of art, not the direct emanation of the spirit. He is fond of painting the passion of love, but he colours his subject with exotic hues. He is too artificial himself to think naturally of anything. He has neither the depth of Shelly, nor the truth of Wordsworth. He is, in brief, a brilliant versifier rather than a great poet."

"But he *is* a poet!" she exclaimed.

"Granted," said I.

"A wit!"

"Granted."

"A man of genius."

"Granted ; but yet he does not write poetry in a style in which poetry should exist. It neither possesses that intensity of power nor that irresistible sincerity which you will invariably find in the poetry of passion and reflection."

"Well, well," she replied, with a bewitching smile, "I suppose I have been worshipping false gods ; but as you have pulled down my idol, I hope you will be so good as to put up another. And since you judge so severely of others, I shall expect you to do better things yourself."

"You will be disappointed," said I.

"You shall write a poem in my album."

"I cannot write poetry without being in love," I replied.

"I thought you *were*," she observed, with peculiar archness.

"I *was not*, but I *am*," I replied emphatically. She blushed slightly.

"I know nothing so likely to occasion poetical feeling," I continued, as I gazed on her eloquent features with sentiments I dared not express, "as to dwell in the sunshine of feminine beauty. A beautiful woman is the most glorious object in creation. Loveliness, though evanescent, though it comes with the fleeting splendour of the rainbow, claims, like that divine appearance, the admiration of the world. I

am a worshipper of beauty wherever I find it. Whether 'in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.' I admire the starry things that pave the skies with their everlasting radiance—the many-coloured blossoms that give splendour and fragrance to the blooming earth—and the precious gems which come from their pearly homes beneath the sea; but female loveliness is a concentration of all things beautiful, and I gaze on its charms with a feeling of adoration far above aught I can feel for all the world besides."

She did not appear offended at the warmth I had infused into my language. I continued—

"Men of warm imaginations must have some one to love them. There has scarcely been a poet or a painter of extraordinary powers, who has not been worshipped by some fair divinity, on whom, in return for such idolatry, he has conferred the imperishable boon of immortality. Poets are beings whose minds are biased entirely according to their tendency to passion or to reflection: when the former has the greater power, the latter is too often forgotten; and even in the reverse, the soul is filled with a thrilling enthusiasm for all that is fair and beautiful, and clings to any object that appears to be impelled by the same impulses. But the love of the poet is as different from the feeling generally known by that name, as the burning crater of Vesuvius outglows all its representatives. The love, too, of a man of genius, has in it something of a great and ennobling character, which exalts the object who has possessed him with a sincere affection, to a summit of proud and lofty ambition. She enjoys, while living, the brightest of intellectual pleasures; and, when dead, has her memory shrouded in everlasting joy. The admiration of posterity sheds a glory on her beauty more powerful than the adoration of the gifted one. Her name becomes the property of time. Her love is to be shared by the hearts of other generations."

"What do you mean by the word *love*?" inquired her ladyship, with a sort of tremulousness in her voice, which plainly told me the importance of the question in her opinion.

"I mean," said I, speaking with a more passionate eloquence, "that devotion of heart and soul which ennobles

both the lover and the person loved—that undying impulse of attachment that moves the life-flood like a whirlwind—that union of thought, feeling, and existence, by which two persons are bound together, that lasts with life and never knoweth change. I mean—”

“Enough!” exclaimed Lady Julia, interrupting me; and then, in an undertone, remarked, “I understand your meaning.”

The manner in which these words were expressed convinced me that I had awakened a powerful interest in the bosom of the beautiful countess. Of this feeling I was resolved to take advantage. Her beauty was of too fascinating, too seductive a character, not to have made a sensible impression upon me. Passion was again exerting its influence; and, as I gazed on those dark lustrous eyes, that met mine full of fond and exquisite meanings, the intelligence they conveyed stirred up all the burning ardour of my spirit. I loved her. Yet my affection was not the pure and gladdening feeling so recently directed towards my devoted cousin; it was an unhallowed desire, a feverish thirst of the soul for forbidden pleasures.

I now saw, by the frequent repetitions of Lady Brambleberry’s glass directed towards me, that my absence had been discovered, and my situation known. As I took my leave, Lady Julia held out her hand—I pressed it warmly.

“The countess is a glorious creature!” observed Mephistopheles, as we were returning to our own box.

“She is an angel!” I exclaimed with rapture.

“She is better than that—she is a woman!” said he, in a tone that sounded much like sarcasm.

“She is beautiful enough for anything!” I replied.

“And what is more to the purpose, she loves you. Nay, do not start!” continued the tempter; “there is nothing extraordinary in the affair. Her ladyship is an enthusiast and a sentimentalist. She has hitherto been kept in her present position more by a sense of propriety than a knowledge of virtue. Passion, poetry, and philosophy will make her your own.”

I had no time to hazard a reply to these observations as we entered the marchioness’s box. Her ladyship was evidently dissatisfied with me. She flirted with my companion till we retired from the theatre, without honouring me with

her attention. Dora regarded me with the same affectionate interest ; but I felt too much engrossed with my passion for Lady Julia to heed her kind and gentle solicitude.

CHAPTER III.

Dora acquaints me with some extraordinary circumstances relating to the latter portion of her life.—Mephistophiles exasperates me by his degrading suspicions of my cousin's sincerity, which I afterward see reason to believe.—I become jealous.—My uncle's liberality, and its consequences.

I WAS not surprised at receiving in the early part of the next day a letter from Dora, acquainting me with my uncle's arrival in town, and his desire to see me immediately ; but there were some portions of the epistle that I could not help considering very extraordinary. The style was as affectionate as ever. However, I did not, I could not at that time, appreciate its fondness ; for my whole soul seemed filled with images of the more seductive Lady Julia. The following sentences were those I considered so singular :—

“ I am going to confess to you what you will consider an unpardonable weakness. During the latter part of your residence at Göttingen, I have been continually haunted in my dreams, and in my waking thoughts, with the visible presence of a fearful form whispering every variety of temptation, endeavouring to lead me into sinful desires, and attempting to frighten me out of my confidence in religion. I knew that these sights and sounds were merely the creation of fancy, yet they seldom failed to exert a terrible influence upon my fears ; and never till I had well strengthened my heart with prayer would they entirely vanish. Alas ! they only departed to return again. No one had the least conception of the tortures I experienced. I did not like to inform any one of the circumstance, from the conviction that I should only get laughed at for being superstitious. The person of my shadowy tormentor was seldom visible

to me, but his features were always distinguishable. I cannot attempt to describe his countenance—it was like nothing I had ever seen. I could not imagine it to belong to anything good or holy. So frequently was it before me, that its impression on my memory is not likely ever to be effaced. I never expected to see such a face belonging to any human form. Judge, then, of my horror and astonishment, in discovering the perfect fac-simile in the features of your friend, the German prince! Although I tried to reason myself out of my terror, I did not succeed. I felt assured that it was all the effect of imagination, yet I still found myself trembling with apprehension and disquietude; and it was not until I had sought the protection of the Divine influence that I recovered sufficient composure to proceed in your friend's society. Do not be offended with me, dear Vincent, for being so foolish; for I cannot wholly divest myself of the idea that there is something dark and dreadful in this matter. What it is I cannot imagine. Your friend may be a very good man, for aught I know, and it is very uncharitable of me to think otherwise; but what strange features he has! I never saw looks so fearful! And it is very singular that there should be so exact a similitude between them and those of my vision. However, it is possible that I may be deceived; I may be suffering from some optical delusion. Then how wrong I must be to judge of your friend from his appearance! Poor man! he cannot help his looks. I will endeavour to think more favourably of him."

"Could Mephistopheles be seeking her for a victim?" thought I. "It is scarcely possible. He dare not!" I exclaimed. At that instant Mephistopheles entered the room.

"What now, my noble master?" he remarked, in a half-jocular, half-respectful manner. "Doth not your fair cousin approve of my delicate physiognomy? 'Tis a pity that because she is occasionally visited by nightmare, she should fatter her indigestion upon my innocent countenance. My face, to be sure, is not particularly prepossessing; it is not 'admirably chiselled' here, and 'beautifully expressive' there; but I ask nobody to admire it. I have never allowed my portrait to be taken. I have never had it engraved to adorn shop-windows and ladies' albums; it has not been

modelled into a bust to ornament a pedestal : yet, little as it may be admired, it possesses one recommendation of which very few human faces can boast—it is the same at all times. You see the worst and the best of it at the same moment. There is no deception practised upon you, as there is in some particular case I could point out."

"What mean you?" said I ; for his sentences were delivered with a certain significance plainly expressing that more was meant than met the ear. "What mean you?" said I again ; for I began to suspect that he knew something of Dora which he either wanted to exaggerate or conceal, for no good purpose towards either her or me. He was still silent. "What mean you?" I inquired a third time, with considerable impatience.

"Nothing!" he cried, with provoking indifference.

"If you have anything to produce against my cousin, you had better strengthen it with good proofs," I exclaimed, with that restless anxiety which a man feels who expects to hear something that will destroy his confidence in the excellence of those he has long loved. The only reply I received was a loud laugh. I felt annoyed.

"By the power I hold," I exclaimed angrily, "I will force you to explain the meaning of this strange conduct."

"Most noble master, I am your slave!" observed my companion, with an humble obeisance. "What would you?"

"Tell me what you have remarked in my cousin's conduct differing from that innocence in which to me all her actions appear clothed?" said I.

"As you entered the Marquis of Brambleberry's library, the day on which you gained from your cousin a confession of her regard for you, did you not observe a man making his exit at another door?" he inquired.

"I did!" I replied, as I recalled the circumstance to memory. "But what of that?"

"Nothing!" said he again, in the same tantalizing tone.

"If you mean to insinuate that my cousin is deceiving me!" I exclaimed fiercely, "I can only tell you that you have commenced a vain experiment." This observation was followed by another laugh louder than the first.

"This is not to be borne!" said I, in a rage I could not suppress. "Vile slanderer! you attempt to torture me by

suspicious. Your allusions are false." I walked with hasty strides and swelling bosom up and down the chamber. Mephistopheles sat perched on the back of a high arm-chair smoking his *meerschaum*. He remained silent for some time, apparently enjoying the mischief he was creating. "Lady Julia's a fine woman!" he at last exclaimed, as he gravely watched a wreath of smoke he had just liberated from his mouth. "What eyes she has! Such a fascinating enthusiast! So full of intellect, passion, beauty, and grace! How she looked at you last night! Then her husband is *rather* stupid, and *very* good-natured—and he's considerably too old for her. Then she loves modern philosophy, and she could be prevailed upon to love a modern philosopher, if—"

"If what?" I exclaimed hurriedly, feeling more interest in his observations than I chose to express.

"Nothing!" he replied.

This was beyond endurance. I snatched up a chair with the design of knocking him off his elevated seat; but as I struck at him, he gave a somerset in the air over my head; and when I turned round, I saw him hastening out at the door, giving utterance to a roar of laughter that seemed capable of shaking down the house. I was in no mood for visiting Lord Melcombe. In spite of my assertions to the contrary, I did not feel quite satisfied with Dora's conduct. A suspicion began to work its way into my mind, which, as rapidly as I destroyed it, arose with increased power. I could not account for the stranger departing from the library at my entrance. It was strange. Who could he have been? Not the marquis—certainly not—perhaps the young viscount. From so slight a foundation as this there presently arose a superstructure, which grew, and grew, and grew, till the whole fabric of jealousy was completed—a fabric it would be difficult to raze. I began to fancy my cousin deceitful—doubted she was as good as she appeared to be, and questioned if she had ever been sincere in her professions of attachment. When we once begin to doubt, there is soon no belief existing; for there are no bounds to incredulity. I turned away from the contemplation of suspected treachery to the consideration of undoubted love. I thought of Lady Julia—her beauty, her genius, the tempting ripeness of her lip, and the melting lustre of

her eye. These agreeable thoughts did not fail to put me in a better humeur ; and I arrived in Belgrave-square in a more social mood than I enjoyed when I left my hotel.

Lord Melcombe was a curious compound of obstinacy and good-nature, prejudice and kindness of heart. He had not many brilliant virtues, and he had no degrading vices. He had been a little of a profligate during his youth, therefore he considered that he was obliged to become a little of a saint in his old age. To prove his own reformation, he tried to reform those whom he thought more wicked than himself ; and when he paid the dividends of several fair annuitants who had once ministered to his youthful pleasures, he accompanied the instalment with bundles of tracts. A check on his banker was sent with " Baxter's Call to the Unconverted," and bank notes were enclosed in a copy of " Holy Living and Dying." He was a liberal landlord to those of his tenants who did not destroy his game, or shoot his pigeons. He might have made an excellent parent ; but he evinced no inclination towards a domestic life, and left the whole arrangements of his family to Lady Honoria. Lady Honoria had proved herself still less qualified to support the responsibilities of a parent than her husband ; and after the earl's divorce from his wife, and discovery of his daughter, a great change for the better had been created in him. He became as attentive as he had before been neglectful, and seemed as well inclined to do too much as he had previously been to do too little. But it was as a political character that he had always been desirous of shining. William Pitt was the god of his idolatry. He thought nothing good which did not bear to him some resemblance. He took a leading part in the debates—was ever ready to resist the attacks of revolution—and never failed to be at his post when the church or the state was threatened with destruction.

In town he studied intently every subject relating to his parliamentary duties, wrote essays on the Balance of Power, and printed treatises on the Mischiefs of Radicalism. In the country he attended all magistrates' meetings, presided at local committees for turnpike-rates, patronised the select vestries, visited prisons and poorhouses, and subscribed to all the charities in the county. He was a kind friend and a bitter enemy, proud of his rank, partial to his country, and

devoted to his king. His sincerity was always undoubted, nor was his generosity ever called in question. He was rather unostentatious in his manners, wore a dress peculiar yet plain, and had never failed to use powder since it had once been taxed. He possessed one great failing ; his temper was irritable, and this often made him unreasonable when thwarted.

The meeting with my uncle was most affectionate. He evinced more genuine feeling than I imagined he possessed. He shook me heartily by the hand, thanked me for my kindness to Dora with tears in his eyes, and asserted, with equal sincerity of heart, that nothing would be so gratifying as to forward our union. The idea of marriage, however, was not so agreeable to me, and I did not receive his proposition with the delight which he had expected it would create. He looked disappointed. As it was not my desire to displease him, I merely stated, that as I intended entering into an active public life, I did not think it advisable to marry immediately.

" You're right, Vincent," he exclaimed with returning satisfaction. " You are too young to marry. But, dear me, what a fine fellow you're grown ! By-the-by, your eyes are very much like those of the great William Pitt, that heaven-born minister. You are now of age ; the lawyers will put you in possession of your property, which you will find increased in value ; but as I wish you to make a figure in the world worthy of your relationship to me, I shall add to it the Melcombe estate, and give you the use of my town house."

I was profuse in my acknowledgments ; for such kindness from the old man was quite unexpected.

" The arrangements are all made," he observed, " and you may avail yourself of them as soon as you please. But, my dear boy, I think it would be advisable for you to visit the borough at your earliest convenience. Our enemies are awake and stirring ; and if you do not begin the campaign immediately, the chance will be lost. You have enjoyed an excellent education, and, I am certain, possess great natural capabilities ; it is, therefore, scarcely necessary to caution you against the plausibilities of the Whigs, or the dangerous doctrines of the Radicals."

I bowed in acknowledgment of the compliment. My

uncle then proceeded to acquaint me with the particular views of his party, which he developed with all the spirit of a thorough partisan. It was then arranged that I should remain in town only a few days longer. An active committee was forming in Melcombe for the purpose of carrying on my election, and my presence had become absolutely necessary to ensure my success.

"Your prospects, my dear Vincent, are most flattering," said the old man, in triumph; "and your return will give great satisfaction to the Conservatives. My influence will not be wanting to forward your interests: and I hope the time is not far distant when I shall behold you holding some ministerial appointment worthy your high birth and the claims of your family. Remember that your political opinions will be those of the great William Pitt—that extraordinary legislator—that unrivalled statesman—that heaven-born minister! Try and tread in the path he trod, and you may become equally distinguished. I must leave you now. I am obliged to attend a meeting of the Duke of Ordnance, Sir Pensive Placid, and other of our leaders, to whom I shall be happy to introduce you on a fitting occasion. But let me see you again soon, and as frequently as possible."

Thus ended our first interview. That it afforded my ambitious hopes a more solid foundation I was fully sensible. To take immediate advantage of these favourable circumstances was my next consideration. I obtained possession of the property to which I was entitled, and removed from the hotel in which I had been residing to the family mansion in Grosvenor-street. I set up an establishment corresponding with the station in society I desired to occupy; became a member of the most fashionable clubs; and studied, as much as possible, the characters of the different political parties. In everything which was likely to create for me a favourable influence as a parliamentary candidate, Lord Melcombe gave me ready assistance. I listened patiently to his lordship's long harangues, and consequently grew more in favour. Dora seemed delighted that matters continued to possess so satisfactory an appearance; and her conduct towards me was always that of the most earnest devotedness. Yet, with shame I avow it, I experienced less and less pleasure in her affection; preferred passing my time in company with the fascinating Lady Julia; and

turned a more willing ear to the suspicions and sarcasms of Mephistophiles. Dora did not seem to notice my inconstancy. Her nature was so full of truth that she never could imagine insincerity in another; and, when in her society, as I continued that lip homage which the smiling profligate has ever at hand, she was perfectly satisfied that my attachment was equal to her own. My jealousy increased; I watched her actions, and found in them abundant food for doubt.

CHAPTER IV.

Some account of the grand entertainment given by the marchioness in honour of her niece's entrance into the *beau monde*.—I associate with the leading members of the Conservative party, and am made acquainted with their policy.—The manner in which I am convinced of the deceitfulness of Dora.

I HAD determined not to leave town till after Dora had "come out," as it is termed. On the day that this important ceremony was to take place, Mephistophiles and I were invited to meet a grand dinner party given by the Marquis of Brambleberry. It consisted of the most distinguished individuals of his particular coterie. The banquet was magnificent; the conversation during dinner sufficiently general and interesting: but when the ladies had withdrawn, and the servants had retired, it became exclusively political. When the company drank as a toast "The pilot that weathered the storm," Lord Melcombe commenced an oration upon what he styled the extraordinary genius of that extraordinary man.

"At the eventful period when that heaven-born minister flourished," exclaimed my uncle, "the whole surface of society was undergoing extraordinary convulsions. It presented the appearance of a volcano previous to one of those mighty eruptions under which cities are buried for ever. These phenomena in the social fabric had their origin in the bad passions of mankind."

"Hear! hear!" exclaimed the Duke of Snapdragon.

"The mischief was kept smouldering in darkness and mystery," continued the orator, "by those workers of evil who build their greatness upon crime, and rest their influence upon credulity, until the time arrived that they thought would ensure its most destructive effect. By the moral earthquake which ensued, kingdoms were shaken to their foundations—"

"Hear! hear!" again exclaimed the Duke of Snap-dragon.

"Thrones were hurled to the dust—"

"Hear! hear!" shouted the duke, with increased energy.

"And the institutions of justice and the altars of religion were defiled with the supremacy of guilt, and soiled with the blood of virtue."

"Hear! hear! hear!" repeated the duke, with supernatural vehemence.

"Hear! hear!" bawled the Marquis of Brambleberry, with equal fervour.

"Hear! hear!" exclaimed the Duke of Ordnance.

"Hear! hear!" repeated Sir Pensive Placid, and the same word was echoed by every voice in the room.

"How much they are all moved by the eloquence of the speaker!" remarked Mephistopheles to me in a whisper; "especially Snapdragon. I am glad to see his royal highness so sensitive upon the subject of revolutions. So good a patriot and so virtuous a man must feel sensibly affected by the deplorable picture sketched by your worthy uncle."

"In a neighbouring kingdom," continued Lord Melcombe, "innocence and merit obtained neither admiration nor respect. The reign of equality had commenced; and as all determined to be equally criminal, the good were delivered up to the executioner. Under the guise of liberty such atrocities were perpetrated as would not have been tolerated in the worst species of slavery."

"Hear! hear!" observed a West India proprietor.

"Nothing like leather!" said Mephistopheles, in an undertone.

"It was not the first, nor has it been the last time," continued the orator, "that a fair name has been a cloak for foul deeds. Hypocrites may always be found preaching such doctrines as universal happiness, fraternization, and

equal rights, who conceal designs tending to produce the misery of the people, general licentiousness, and their own omnipotence. At the period to which I allude, there were visible signs that the Destructives of the Continent were striving to create in happy England the anarchy and ruin which had disgraced their own wretched country. Writings were disseminated, societies formed, and meetings held to promote this mischievous object. Some wild enthusiasts, who were caught by the fine names and the fine projects of the new philosophy, aided with their talents and influence the plots of the designing revolutionists. Some idle visionaries fancied that a change in the government would be beneficial to the country ; others, more weak and more wicked, saw that evil would ensue, but thought that good would follow more than sufficient to counterbalance the harm ; and the rest longed for a revolution, some from a desire of novelty, many expecting to better their fortunes by the ruin of the more wealthy, and all breathing hatred to laws and religion. It was at this time that the distinguished man whose memory we all so greatly honour, saw the approaching hurricane, and made preparations to shield his country from its terrible visitation. He threw himself into the arena of political warfare, armed at all points with wisdom, religion, and loyalty, in defence of the state, the church, and the king. My lords and gentlemen, he was 'the pilot that weathered the storm.' He was the skilful mariner that guided the constitution in safety over the breakers of Jacobinism, and through the tempests of revolution ; and by his wise and patriotic exertions in those troubled times, he placed the kingdom in security, the people in prosperity, and the national character high in the admiration of surrounding Europe !"

Considerable applause followed these observations.

" How eloquent some folks can become when their own interests are concerned ! " whispered Mephistopheles. " If a revolution had been effected, none of these worthies would now be enjoying themselves at this luxurious banquet. Let them then congratulate each other on the goodness of Providence."

" How much of what my right honourable friend has spoken in his usual forcible manner is applicable to the

present time!" observed Lord Plausible, an ex-lord chancellor.

"How much indeed!" exclaimed the Duke of Ordnance solemnly, as he filled his mouth with pineapple.

"Not a sentence but might be applied to the men and measures of the present age," said Sir Pensive Placid; "with this difference only—the Whigs, the great promoters of the movement at that period, now form the government of the country."

"'Tis a lamentable fact!" ejaculated old Lord Dubious, another ex-lord chancellor, with tears in his eyes. "But I doubt that they will much longer be able to continue an administration."

"And it will be a good thing for England when they are obliged to beat a retreat," remarked the Marquis of Brambleberry earnestly. "They cannot hold out much longer. Attacked by the Radicals on one side, and pressed by the Conservatives on the other, they must be beaten before long. I think if his grace were once more to take his proper place, and lead our forces against the common enemy, the Great Captain would add another victory to his hundred triumphs."

A general shout of applause followed this hint.

"I hope I shall always be found at my post when I am wanted," said the Duke of Ordnance solemnly, clearing his throat by way of preparation for a speech, and looking cautiously round the table as if to learn what friends were present. "Should my sovereign honour me with his commands at a time of insecurity to the crown, and of danger to the public welfare, I am not the man likely to deny him my public services."

"Hear! hear!" exclaimed a dozen powerful voices.

"But," continued his grace, "I assure you, my lords and gentlemen, I am not anxious for office. If I can render assistance in a time of need, I shall be but too proud to do so in the humblest capacity. The only man I think, at these unsettled times, capable of taking the lead in a Conservative ministry, is my esteemed friend on my right. I trust he will at a proper time dedicate the exalted talents he possesses to the proper fulfilment of the highest office of the state. It is not my opinion that at the present moment a demonstration of Conservative strength is advisable; but when it

becomes necessary, you may depend upon finding me in the front rank."

When the applause which this speech had occasioned had subsided, Sir Pensive Placid rose.

"If at the close of my existence," exclaimed the orator, looking perfectly at ease, and having more the appearance of the orator than any person I have met with, "there should be a time to which I might look back with more gratification than to any other period, it would certainly be the present moment. It is, indeed, with a proud satisfaction I observe the confidence with which you honour me. His grace, with that nobility of soul which has always marked his splendid career, has acknowledged an inclination to give up the high office for which his great merits form so perfect a recommendation, in favour of so unworthy an individual as myself. I cannot be insensible of the honour he has conferred upon me, nor would I do his grace the injustice to decline a superiority which he has been pleased to think me fit to exercise. I declare, with the deepest sincerity, that whatever office I may hold with the greatest advantage to the state, there I shall always be found ready to do my duty. I, however, concur with his grace in thinking that the time has not yet come for putting into practice all the power our party possesses. We must wait. Defeat ought not to be hazarded by impatience. The time will come, and that apparently in a short period, when those legislators who have proved themselves, by long and valuable service, the wisest ministers and most faithful guardians of the laws and liberties of this favoured country, will be again called to fill the offices they once held so much to the honour and glory of the state; and I feel assured that then, and only then, will England recover that high respect with surrounding nations, and that general prosperity at home which she has lost under the mischievous government of her present rulers."

During the applause which followed the delivery of the preceding sentences, Mephistophiles whispered to me in that tone and manner so peculiarly his own—

"Who would suppose that there was so much patriotism—so much disinterestedness—so much magnanimity in the world? Verily, the age is rich in excellence! But look at Snapdragon; is he not the picture of a most absolute

prince ? How royally he confesses, with the venerable Dubious, who, by the lachrymose state of his eyelids, feels deeply the condescension with which he is honoured. Observe Lord Chuny, that dandy of legislators, diligently twisting his fingers through his most favoured ringlets, as he listens to the confidential secret (universally known) related to him by that dupe of diplomatists, Crookedstick. Ordnance looks as stiff as a field-marshall at a review, while attending to the mild and gentlemanly eloquence of his sworn coadjutor, Sir Pensive Placid. Your uncle has commenced another oration, but his audience are not quite so attentive as he thinks they ought to be ; however, he remains satisfied with the marked attention of two or three younger brothers, who want places. What a group ! Where shall we meet such exalted politicians ? ”

After this development of the policy of the party which my uncle expected me to join, the conversation was carried on in small coteries. The guests formed themselves into divisions, and discussed among themselves the measures of their political opponents, the state of public opinion, and the prospects of legitimate government in foreign countries. After coffee had been served, we adjourned up-stairs, where we found the whole suite of rooms filled with the *élite* of the fashionable world. Nothing could exceed the brilliant manner in which this entertainment had been arranged. The marchioness, regardless of expense, determined, in the *début* of her niece, to produce such an effect as should excel all former displays ; consequently everything that was rare, valuable, and elegant was provided with the most profuse extravagance. The grand staircase was lined with the choicest exotics ; chandeliers of the most expensive workmanship hung at short intervals from the ceiling ; and every place appeared in a blaze of light, wealth, and beauty.

I left Mephistophiles in the cardroom, sitting down to a rubber with the Dukes of Snapdragon and Ordnance, and Lord Dubious, with whom he had ingratiated himself. I proceeded with Lord Melcombe to promenade the apartments. We entered the music-room. There a swarthy Italian was exercising his pliant voice, to the great gratification of a crowd of female admirers.

“ It is very good of Lady Brambleberry,” remarked my uncle, as he walked along with a proud look and an erect

carriage, which plainly testified the satisfaction he found in the scene, "very good of her, to give so splendid an entertainment in honour of Dora. But Dora is worthy of it : she is so beautiful and so good. I would give half my fortune if that infirmity of hers could be cured. Sir Astley tells me there is no hope; so I must be resigned to the will of Providence. Clever man, too, that Sir Astley : cured the Earl of Claret's gout. I should advise you, my dear boy, to cultivate the acquaintance of the marquis : he is a most worthy man, a brave soldier, and a powerful supporter of the good cause ; but he is not so popular as he ought to be. The great William Pitt—that heaven-born minister, whose name every good man will venerate—treated the clamours of the mob with the contempt they deserved. I hope you will study the admirable policy of that illustrious statesman. Ha ! here comes my excellent friend Lord Pettifogger—his father was the eminent lawyer of that name. I'll introduce you. Glad to see your lordship looking so well," remarked my uncle, to a good-humoured simple-looking personage, as he advanced up to us. "Let me introduce my nephew. My Lord, Mr. Herbert—Vincent, Lord Pettifogger."

I bowed, and his lordship did the same.

"Most proud to claim the acquaintance of any member of so illustrious a family," observed the son of the eminent lawyer to me. "I had the honour of knowing your father well, sir ; I hope he enjoys his usual good health."

"He has, unfortunately, been dead these twenty years," said I.

"Dear me, is it possible !" exclaimed his lordship, with well-feigned astonishment. "But, we must all die. He made an excellent lord privy seal."

"He never held office, although he would at any time have been proud to serve the state," remarked my uncle.

"No doubt, no doubt !" said Lord Pettifogger. "It is a pity his talents were not allowed proper scope. I have been reading the works of your great ancestor, Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Great genius—worthy of his descendants."

"I am afraid our family cannot claim any relationship with that distinguished nobleman," I observed. "We be-

long to the Herberts of Herbert ; and, as the linendrapers say, have no connection with any other house."

" Ha ! ha !" shouted the noble lord, while his mouth threatened to spread from ear to ear. " Facetious, I declare !"

We passed on. My uncle continually met some " particular friend," and I went through the ceremony of introduction with every one ; bowed and listened, and performed the amiable to the satisfaction of all parties. Lord Melcombe was in the best spirits. Every one had some favourable observation to make upon the appearance of his daughter. They were "surprised," "delighted," "charmed beyond measure." "Never had the *début* of any young lady made so extraordinary a sensation." My uncle seemed proud of the interest his daughter had excited. In fact there appeared to be but one subject for conversation ; every one spoke of it ; wondered, exaggerated, pitied, and admired. Since the first particulars of Dora's history had got into circulation, they had formed the daily food of all the idlers in town ; and there were as many different stories told as there were storytellers to relate them. I was generally the hero of the tale, and was frequently called upon to vouch for facts of which I was completely ignorant ; *facts* that had never existed. To say the truth, I was getting rather tired of being appealed to as an authority in the most absurd statements, and often regretted that Dora had left her retirement at Melcombe. Her father, however, took the matter in a very different light. He liked the importance into which he was brought ; and during the time he remained with me, to my great annoyance, he gave a circumstantial account, but not exactly a correct one, of Dora's history to three princesses, two royal dukes, and a score of curious dowagers. At last he left me to make a confidential communication to some "very particular friend" he saw at a distance. I immediately hurried out of the room.

" Ha, Herbert ! how do ?" exclaimed a voice at my elbow. I turned round, and beheld my epicurean friend, Sir Dumpling Porringer. I thought he looked unhappy, as if labouring under a fit of indigestion. " Seen any thing of Sponge ?" he asked with particular earnestness. " Disappeared suddenly. Quite awful ! My pocket book, containing large amount, gone too. Odd coincidence, eh ?"

I could not forbear laughing at the simplicity with which this was uttered ; but, knowing the man of the world as well as I did, I thought the coincidence a natural result. Sir Dumpling had scarcely disappeared, when I was accosted by the honourable Augustus St. John:

"Heavy debate last night," said the young member with a yawn. "Legislation's a sad bore. Never attempt to enter the house," continued the ex-dandy, adjusting his hair in a little mirror set in gold that he carried in his waistcoat pocket. "Those late hours spoil the complexion ; and making speeches destroys the constitution." I knew that he seldom made his appearance at St. Stephen's, and had never attempted to deliver half a dozen sentences there. "But you know one has constituents—a set of horrid people—savages ; and the country, my dear sir—the country looks up to us. One cannot disappoint the country. By-the-by, have you seen Sponge lately ?"

"Another victim !" thought I. The young member would not give me time to reply.

"He promised to get a bill discounted for me by some obliging friend of his ; since when I have never seen his lordship, the bill, or the cash."

"Nor do I think you are at all likely to see either," said I.

"No ! You don't say so ?" exclaimed the honourable Augustus, in considerable alarm. "How very odd ! I did not think his lordship was that sort of person. I should not have so much cared, only at this particular period of our history the circulating medium—"

I saw he was threatening a speech, and I therefore manifested much impatience. He continued,—"That is to say, the state of the currency is such, that unless we have the resumption of one pound notes, and our moneyed transactions are placed upon the same footing as they were before the legislature thought proper to make experiments with the old system, to the great injury of the capitalist—"

"Is there no deliverance ?" thought I, almost resigning myself to my fate.

"The principle of exchange will undergo so extraordinary an alteration, and a standard of value will be so difficult to adjust with universal satisfaction ; in fact, to express the whole merit of the question in a few words—"

"*Vive la bagatelle!*" exclaimed, to my great satisfaction, Captain Fitz-Grey. The discomfited orator left me in despair. "Ah!" continued the captain, looking significantly after the departing member. "A threatened speech again placed *hors de combat*. *Mon Dieu!* I wonder you are alive. He is the *beau idéal* of a bore. *A propos* of bores, what's become of Sponge? I think he has taken for his motto, *Devenez riche, et ne vous faites pas prendre.*"

"Monsieur Tonson again!" I exclaimed, with a laugh.

"No joke though," my companion observed. "Never knew a fellow so *sans principes*. But he makes himself so 'd——d agreeable' that *one* is obliged to treat him with *confidence perfectionnée*."

"He has not *done* you, has he?" I inquired.

"*Mille tonnerres!* he has got my cabriolet!" in a tone of the most complete vexation, said the exquisite. "I lent it him, and he has sold it."

These were not the only instances I heard of the peculiar talent possessed by the man of the world for what is termed "conveyancing;" it was evident, as he himself had stated, that he had "no prejudices, no false modesty, no useless pride." In an after conversation, Fitz-Grey told me that Lady Brambleberry was much incensed by my leaving her society to pay so much attention to Lady Julia. He warned me that she would do me an injury if she could. It appeared that the marchioness and the countess divided the world of fashion. One led the Tory party, the other reigned over the Whigs. They never visited each other, and their particular sets never mingled together. Lady Julia's youth, beauty, wit, and superior understanding caused her parties frequently to be crowded with the most distinguished persons of every political creed; the knowledge of this fact greatly annoyed her rival, and she was ready to do anything which could lessen Lady Julia's popularity. The exquisite left me to join a brother officer, and I made my way to the ballroom, to which I was directed by the sweet harmonies of Collinet's band.

This chamber was almost as much thronged as the others. I retired into a recess behind a copy of Canova's Dancing Girl, where I might see everything without being observed. They were dancing the galopade. The sylph-like form and mild beauty of Dora distinguished her from her companions.

Her partner was the young Viscount Lupin ; and as they whirled round together in the mazes of the voluptuous waltz, with his arm round her waist, and his looks warm with passion, I could observe the intense gratification her features expressed. There could not be a doubt that he was the person I had seen in the library; and she was—what I hardly dared allow myself to think. Such hypocrisy I thought could have no name to be designated by. The feelings of jealousy I had nurtured came stronger upon me. I did not hate *her*, but I hated *him*. I could have killed him on the spot—he looked so smiling, so happy, so fond, where, I considered, I alone had a right to look so. More vexations were, however, in store for me. A group of idlers had congregated near the place where I was concealed. I heard and knew their voices.

"It is all idle stuff, these stories of her great accomplishments!" remarked Miss Rhimewell, in a tone of pique. "I have got a sonnet which is said to have been written by her, and I can see nothing in it at all."

"Oh, do let us hear it!" exclaimed Lady Ringdove.

"Here is a copy of the affair, such as it is," said the fashionable poetess; "and, if you really think it worth listening to, I will read it." She then read, in an affected tone, with a most deplorable singsong cadence, the following

SONNET.

"The hours are flying fast—(Time spurs them on;) !
The dream dissolves in darkness and in gloom ;
The bliss that formed our joyousness is gone :—
Fate weaves Love's funeral vestments with her loom !
Why do I dread this melancholy doom ?
Why see around no hope to dwell upon ?
I fear the sunshine, which hath been my light,
Will fade into a dim and starless night ;
I doubt the joy, which is my life's sweet food,
Will longer feed my soul's fond appetite.
Why dread I this ? I know that thou art good,
Fond, kind, and true,—all things I most would have,—
Yet there's an evil spirit in my blood
That mocks at Heaven, and sinks despairing to the
grave !"

"It is quite an absurd idea," said the honourable Mr.

Silversfork, in his usual authoritative manner, "to suppose that any sentiment worth knowing should be limited to a certain quantity of words. Why should not a sonnet be written in forty lines as well as in fourteen?"

"Most true!" remarked Lady Flatterill; "you are always right. I often thought that your works failed to produce effect from the same reason. Why should not a novel be written in thirty as well as in three volumes?"

"It's a settled thing," said Sir Lionel Satyr, "that the viscount is to possess this *dumb belle*. Much good may it do him."

"Dumb belle!" exclaimed Miss Spite, a young lady on the wrong side of thirty; "I believe it's half affectation. It's quite ridiculous of the marchioness to make so much fuss on her account."

"I thought her cousin Herbert was to have her," observed Lady Ringdove.

"She does not like him; he's too much of a puppy," said the oracular Mr. Silversfork.

"I heard he was very much attached to her," continued Lady Ringdove.

"Attached! He is too partial to himself to love anybody else," remarked Sir Lionel Satyr.

"How much you must thank Providence, my dear Sir Lionel," exclaimed Lady Flatterill, "that it is quite impossible such should be your own case."

The ugliest baronet upon town walked away but little pleased with the compliment. Miss Spite followed, and the rest soon after joined the dancers.

I took one look towards Dora and her partner. They were sitting close together at a little distance from me. He was evidently whispering his detestable admiration into her ear; and she, with smiling glances, expressed her perfect satisfaction. My blood seemed boiling with indignation. I had really and truly loved her; and thus so soon to be slighted for an idle, worthless coxcomb like Lupin was unbearable. My opinion of the whole sex sunk beyond recovery. I raised my eyes from the spot, and met the scorching glance of Mephistophiles directed towards me with an expression the most hateful and triumphant. He stood close to my elbow.

"Are you satisfied, most incredulous master of mine," said he, in a whisper.

"Lead me from this damn able place!" I exclaimed.

He only replied with a low and hollow laugh. It was too subdued to be heard by those around; but it seemed to thrill through every bone in my body. I hurried home, and the next morning we started for Melcombe.

CHAPTER V.

A singular character.—Some particulars concerning electioneering manœuvres, showing how an unpopular candidate may become "the man of the people."—Mephistophiles and John Bull.—The successful result of my canvass.

ON my arrival at Melcombe House, I found that a committee, composed of my uncle's principal tenants, headed by Mr. Timothy Whisp, his lordship's confidential steward, had been actively engaged in canvassing the electors.

Mr. Timothy Whisp was a rather singular sort of man. He had grown up in the family, and had certainly grown to some purpose. He stood six feet one in his stockings. Had his body possessed a thickness in proportion to its length, he would have been a fine-looking man; but he was remarkably thin; thin legs, thin body, and thin face. There was no sort of substance in him; he was a mere shadow. It appeared as if nature had intended him to be something less than five feet in height, and that he had been stretched to his present altitude by some mechanical process. His person was the more singular from his style of dress. Almost everything he wore was a particular shade of brown; brown hat, brown wig, brown—no, *very red* face, with nose to match; brown coat, brown waistcoat, brown smallclothes, and brown gaiters, with stockings, gloves, and handkerchief of the same colour. His predilection for this particular tint was continually evinced. He always had his meat done brown; ate brown bread; drank brown stout; rode a brown mare; was partial to

brown dogs ; very often went without gloves that his hands might be browned by the sun ; and, whenever he seemed reflecting, was always in a brown study. He liked to see everything painted brown ; used brown furniture, curtains, carpet ; and, in fact, carried this one idea to such an extent, that once, as I was passing through the hall, and required the services of the footman, whose name I had heard, I called out " Brown ! " and in an instant, the butler, under-butler, coachman, groom, footman, stable-boy, two game-keepers, and half a dozen female servants rushed towards me—they were all *Browns*. But Mr. Timothy Whisp was clever and faithful ; was known by everybody, and knew everybody's business. An able man for his situation could scarcely be found, and he became extremely useful to me.

The walls were covered with placards, directing the people to " Vote for Herbert," announcing " Herbert and the Constitution," and giving various other notices of my desire to become a representative. My opponent was Sir Steadfast Folly, a Whig baronet, of considerable property in the neighbourhood, between whose family and mine there had always been much opposition. His party was supported by the Radicals. The latter mustered strong in numbers, but were more remarkable for noise than for influence. The seat of the election was the small market-town of Melcombe, generally a very quiet, unpretending sort of place, but now a scene of bustle and confusion—a very Babel of tumult. Every public-house was thrown open for the entertainment of the electors ; and every room was crammed with a multitude of noisy partisans, feasting and drinking till they could not stand, and then reeling about the town, breaking the windows and heads of the opposition. My colours were blue, and they were liberally displayed. Mr. Timothy Whisp assured me that brown was a much prettier colour. Sir Steadfast sported pink, and every ragamuffin was distinguished with ribands of that colour in his hat, or at his buttonhole. Although each street was full of animation, the greatest uproar was always to be found in the market-place, an open space in the centre of the town, where the cattle are penned on market-days : on one side of which was a large inn, called the Black Swan, where my committee sat : and exactly opposite stood a building of a similar character, called the Blue Lion, which held the committee of my op-

ponent. Both houses were covered with large placards and streaming flags. Between them was the mob, such as is usually collected on such occasions ; and these most noisy individuals were addressed during the day—often by both candidates at the same time—by myself and Sir Steadfast.

I had much to contend against. The lower orders were most vehement in their abuse of me for coming forward on the Tory interest ; and, at first, I was frequently honoured with a salute of turnip-tops, carrots, and rotten apples, besides groans and hisses, sufficient to drive many a stout heart from the conflict, whenever I attempted to address the multitude. Nothing could exceed my unpopularity. Mr. Timothy Whisp seemed to think I had no chance. This had no other effect than to make me double my exertions. The Whig candidate was vastly liberal with his opinions, but his actions were quite the reverse. He loved talking, but hated expense. In fact, he was a very good sort of stupid, miserly old gentleman. Of this I took immediate advantage. Casks of beer were kept always at hand for all that thirsted ; and an unlimited quantity of bread and cheese, and cold meats, was offered to the hungry. Of course it was soon known at whose expense these good things were provided. I had bands of music playing in every direction, which delighted the mob. I had numberless popular orators at command, who inveighed against the meanness of Sir Steadfast, eulogized my liberality, swore that I was a real reformer, and the other was a stingy old humbug : and, in a very short time, the pink ribands began rapidly to disappear, the blue to multiply to the same extent, and “Herbert for ever !” was shouted from every lane and corner, so long as the ragged patriots were sober enough to be able to open their mouths.

I was delighted with the excitement of the contest, and went everywhere soliciting votes, explaining my political opinions, which I always made accord with those of the party present,—giving dinners to the principal farmers, and balls to their wives and daughters,—drinking and smoking with the men, and dancing with and flattering the women. This had the result I expected. On the first day of the poll I found myself the popular candidate.

I did not fail to call upon my excellent friend the curate. After some search, I found him helping a poor neighbour

to gather in his second crop of bay. He was delighted to see me. I then asked him for his vote.

"I hope," said the good man, "you will not be offended if I do not assist you in this contest. It is my humble opinion, that a minister of religion should never become a political partisan; and since I have possessed a vote I have never made use of it. I never intend to use it. I am most anxious for your success, because I feel assured you possess qualities of heart and mind which will distinguish you as an able legislator; and I am doing violence to my own feelings while I shrink from affording you the assistance you have a right to expect from me. Believe me, that nothing but the conviction that I am performing my duty forces me to adopt this neutrality. Sincere piety and party politics can never be found in the same society."

Although I regretted the curate's determination, I could not help admiring his principles; and I have more than once thought, that, if every clergyman acted in the same manner as the Rev. Mark Thoroughgood, the church would receive less abuse.

Mephistopheles was worth fifty committees to me, with Mr. Timothy Whisp into the bargain. He invariably gained every vote we went in quest of. Those of the electors who were the most active in preaching purity of election were always well bribed, and the vote of the anti-corruptionist was sure to follow. The bitterest Radicals were made to join my party by an appeal to some passion or prejudice which had long been concealed; and even many of the Whigs were kept neutral by awakening a distrust or dislike of the representative of their party.

On the first day of the election, having early in the morning, from the window of the Black Swan, addressed the crowd on the usual topics, with great effect, and seen my opponent so hooted, pelted, and groaned at, as to be unable to utter a sentence, I started with Mephistopheles on a personal canvass. We met with more success than I had anticipated, and continually sent new friends off to the poll, most of whom had sterling reasons for giving me their suffrages. As we were hastening along we met a singular-looking individual, with a copper-coloured complexion, a large head covered with long red hair, his person enveloped in a dark smock frock, below which were seen a pair of the

most decided bandy legs, dressed in blue worsted stockings, and thick shoes with tremendous nails in them. He was the village blacksmith, rather an influential man, and was going in his Sunday clothes to give his vote.

"Ha, ha! Master Forge!" said I, shaking the strange object by the hand, as if he had been the best friend I had in the world; "how goes the world with you? And how are your family?"

"These be bad times to get on, zur!" said the man, touching his straw hat respectfully; "and Missus be uncommon poorly, and the little uns ha' got the hoopin'-cough."

"Sorry to hear that, my friend!" said I, appearing to take a most affectionate interest in the affair; "but something must be done for them. I'll send Dr. Gripe there immediately."

"Thee be'st main kind, zur; but my friend, Zur Steadfast, sent Maister Quackery last light."

"Humph!" said I to myself; "the enemy has been first in the field this time."

"But, my good friend," I exclaimed, in the most insinuating manner, "I am told you have a vote; and I am sure you are too good a friend to the family to give it to my opponent."

"Why you see, zur," said the blacksmith, making figures on the ground with his stick, and looking particularly foolish, "times be uncommon hard, and Zur Steadfast has promised to stand my friend, and I doan't loike to offend him, zur; and Maister Whisp last Lammas-day was main hard upon me for the rent. Ten pun ten a year, zur, is a mortal lot o' money for such a bit of a place."

"Well, my worthy fellow, you shall have it for the future at half that sum," said I, offering a bait.

"Thank 'e, zur, koindly," he replied, putting his hand to his hat. "But I hopes no offence, zur: only I loikes to have my poleetical opinyins loike. You be a Tory, zur; and I ha' heard zay thit there be nothing but bribery and corrooption going forrad among the Tories. Now I hopes no offence; but I hates bribery and corrooption. I wouldn't take a bribe, zur—noa, that I 'ouldn't, not for all the 'varsal world: I hates bribery and corrooption zo deadly bad!"

"My good friend!" here exclaimed Mephistopheles, "how much do you want for the blackbird now hanging in your little back parlour?"

"Oh, that be a capital blackbird, zur; there bean't zich another bird in the parish, zur. I wouldn't part wi' him for twenty pound," observed the elector.

I took the hint from Mephistopheles, and drew from my pocket a bank note for twenty pounds and a sovereign, which I placed in the blacksmith's huge hands.

"Here," said I; "here are twenty guineas. I'm particularly fond of blackbirds: I should take it as a favour if you would sell me yours."

Mister Forge looked at the money, then at me, then at Mephistopheles, then took a survey round him to see that no one was watching, and then quietly deposited the money in his sob.

"The bird's your'n, zur," said he, putting on his coppery physiognomy a significant smile. "But this bean't bribery and corroption, zur?—cause I hates bribery and corroption."

"Oh no, my good friend!" said I, laughing at his affected ignorance of a bribe: "nothing of the kind. Then I think I may depend upon your interest?"

"O, eez, zur, I'll do my best," he replied. "Besides, Zur Steadfast only makes promises, and you be more of a gentleman. But you won't forget the matter about the rent, zur? Times be main hard, and ten pun ten's a mortal deal o' money."

"Make yourself perfectly easy," I exclaimed, shaking my worthy constituent most cordially by the hand.

"But I hates bribery and corroption, zur," repeated the man.

"I'm perfectly convinced of that," said I; and we parted. I laughed heartily at the gentleman's incorruptibility.

"In all these farces that are called elections," remarked Mephistopheles, "the candidate that *lies* the most and *bribes* the most is sure to succeed. Purity of election is an idea that every member of parliament must laugh at, unless he be a most superlative hypocrite. Even when the candidate is 'the man of the people,' as some are absurdly termed, he must cringe and fawn, and flatter, and be ready to do any dirty work, to make himself agreeable to his dirty constitu-

ents. There are two classes of members—asses and knaves ; the former are the dupes of those who have sent them to the poll, the latter make dupes of those who gave them their suffrages. As for being representatives of the nation, they are just as likely to be representatives of their grandmothers. The popular party gain influence by strength of voice and vulgar intimidation—the wealthy party get into power by length of purse and aristocratic tyranny. It is ‘clamour versus cash’ whenever they oppose each other. There never was a truer saying than that of one of your English ministers, who said that ‘every man had his price.’ You may buy the whole herd of mankind at so much a head, only you must be careful in your purchase to take them at their own valuation—a difficult matter sometimes to find out, as this estimation varies according to circumstances. With regard to political parties, your Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, they have all the same object—the possession of power in their own hands, and the consequent exclusion of their opponents from its advantages. The struggles they have lately had for superiority put me in mind of an odd coincidence. The natives of a certain island found themselves so overrun with rats that they imported a colony of cats for the purpose of destroying the nuisance. In a short time these cats multiplied so rapidly, and became so very mischievous, that the poor islanders found it necessary to introduce several savage curs, with the intention of worrying and driving away both rats and cats. Alas ! the inhabitants have discovered, to their great annoyance, that the savage curs are more destructive than either of their predecessors, and care more for the good things of the island than for anything else. The people are now preyed upon by three species of vermin instead of one.”

Our next visit was to a substantial yeoman, who farmed a small property of his own. His name was John Bull, and he gloried in the appellation. He was a hard-working, hard-drinking, hard-featured man of about thirty, muscular in his figure, blunt in his manner, a leader of the Radicals, and a great favourite with his party. I wished much to gain the influence of this personage, as I knew he could command several votes. My oracle in these matters, Mr. Timothy Whisp, assured me that there was not the least hope of attaching him to my interests. I had, therefore, given up

the idea ; but Mephistophiles, as we approached the dwelling of this powerful Radical, persuaded me to enter and try my chance. The house was a small, low, snug abode, built in a style of architecture it is not easy to describe—old fashioned and neat. The front was covered with a pear-tree, and the brown fruit hung in countless clusters amid the thick foliage. The principal entrance was through a long garden, where all gave evidence of excellent cultivation and abundant produce. At the other side of the building stood the farmyard, where ducks, pigs, turkeys, geese, fowls, and other livestock were rambling about, making all the noise they could. Two nags were seen in an adjoining paddock, several teams of fine cart-horses were at plough in a neighbouring field, a numerous flock of sheep were grazing in a distant meadow, a herd of cows were coming towards the farm, under the direction of a boy, the roof of the house was covered with pigeons, the sound of the flail came vigorously from the barn, and everything in the neighbourhood bespoke the owner a man of some wealth and more industry. I heard a gruff, thick, masculine voice singing. I listened, and distinguished the following words :—

“ John Barleycorn be a jolly old fellow ;
 His noodle be white and his body be yellow ;
 He never drinks whisky, rum, brandy, or gin,—
 Thinks punch be a folly, and grog be a sin,
 Yet’s all day in his cups—never goes to bed sober ;
 And was born in the jolly old month of October.
 John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
 A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“ John Barleycorn be a jolly old hearty,
 He damns the pope’s toe, and has damned Bonaparty ;
 He hates foreign wines—scorns to swallow such slops—
 Has taught folks to reel who delight in his hops,
 And persuaded Giles Bumps to enlist for a sodger,
 Because his dear Molly has taken to Roger.
 John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
 A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“ John Barleycorn be a jolly old Trojan,
 A fellow at tricks that be beaten by no John ;
 Him doth science so bother, and learning perplex,
 That he never were taught any letter but X ;

Yet be he an optician, who can with small trouble
Teach folks without spectacles soon to *see double* !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“John Barleycorn be a jolly old jockey,
Much valued at skittles, much favoured at hockey ;
He oft takes a hand, too, at all sorts of crafts ;
But at games—there were never his fellow at *draughts* :
And so valiant be he, that had he but his flagon,
He could easily have *floored* both St. George and the dragon !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“John Barleycorn be a jolly old joker,
Not polished and stiff like a drawing-room poker,
But full of good stories and laughable squibs,
So droll and so strange that they tickle one’s ribs ;
He laughs and *all* laugh ; and, I know ‘tis no fable,
His friends, from his jokes, have rolled *under the table* !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“John Barleycorn be a jolly old buffer,
He be not the fellow harsh usage to suffer ;
Though poor folk have not sixpence he’ll still take their *parts* ;
And those that be *ale*-ing, he’ll comfort their hearts.
Each girl through his means finds a lover to court her, •
And he oft gives the burdened the aid of a *porter* !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“John Barleycorn ! thou’rt a jolly old crony,
I love thee as much as thou hatest old Boney.
Away with all things that be foreign and fine,
Thy bright honest face be worth rivers of wine !
As between Whigs and Tories thou’st ever stood neuter,—
I’d frame thee in gold—but thou’rt better in *pewter* !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !

“John Barleycorn be a jolly old toper ;
He never were fancied a rude interloper ;
He has lived for as much as a thousand long years,
And day after day he still younger appears !
He still lives, and still will while a cask’s left to sit on ;
And long may we boast such a **REGULAR BRITON** !

John Barleycorn ! John Barleycorn !
A jolly good health to John Barleycorn !”

As the song concluded, I lifted up the latch, and entered what I knew to be the kitchen of the farmhouse. It was a chamber of considerable dimensions, with one large window on the opposite side looking into the yard, and two smaller ones looking into the garden. There was a door on each side. From the ceiling were suspended a multitude of greasy brown paper parcels, which I readily recognised as hams, and in a rack nearer to the chimney I observed two or three sides of bacon. The room was well furnished with all things likely to add to its comfort. Birds' eggs of every variety, and shells, of different colours, of the hedge-snail, hung in festoons from the ceiling. Over the fireplace were suspended a gun, a fishing-rod, and a shot-belt; a large bunch of new wheat, a fox's brush, and several bundles of dry herbs. A shelf there placed was crowded with brass candlesticks, shining as bright as gold, with several other utensils equally serviceable. The floor was of red brick, clean and even; and the chairs and tables were of common wood, most probably as old as the house which they decorated. In the chimney-corner, an important place in the kitchen of a farmhouse, before a large fire, though the day was remarkably warm, on a high-backed antique chair, with his face towards us, sat John Bull. He had taken up a long clay pipe from several that lay before him, associated with a spacious pewter tankard of home-brewed, on a small round table, and was filling it with tobacco. His feet, cased in thick-soled half-boots, laced up in front, and well nailed, rested upon a three-legged stool, near which a cat and her kittens lay quietly asleep: under his chair rested a ferocious looking bull-dog. The farmer's legs were covered with thick leather gaiters that reached nearly up to his hips; under them were breeches of coarse corduroy: a red waistcoat, and a fustian jacket, were all that were particularly striking in his dress. His round, ruddy cheeks, large mouth, and gray eyes, were expressive of good-humour; but, as we entered, I observed his countenance change to an expression of sullen indifference. He did not notice us, except when his ugly dog was going to make a spring towards me: he gave the beast a violent pat on the head, which made him shriek back into his hiding-place. I saw that this man was not to be bribed.

"Good-day, farmer!" I exclaimed, with my best bow.

"Thee be dommed!" was the courteous reply.

This repulse did not disconcert me; I was anxious to conciliate the Radical, and determined not to notice his rudeness.

"I have called to solicit your vote, Mr. Bull, as a candidate for the representation of this important borough. As it is requisite, in times like these, that a proper understanding should exist between the candidate and the electors, I am ready to enter into a full explanation of my political opinions; and I am sure, from what I have heard of your good sense, and sound independent principles, that we shall be found to agree perfectly."

"Thee be dommed!" was the only answer I received.

"The savage!" I exclaimed, in an under tone, to Mephistopheles. However, I was not to be turned from my purpose by such a specimen of rustic civility. I commenced again:—

"I am willing to go heart and hand with all sincere reformers in eradicating those abuses which have crept into the constitution; I am desirous of removing all laws that press unequally upon the people; and I can safely assert, that, if elected, I shall at all times be found doing my duty to the country, and carefully attentive to the interests of my constituents."

The farmer listened with a settled gravity of physiognomy to my observations, occasionally puffing forth huge volumes of smoke; and when I concluded, I fancied that I had made a favourable impression.

"Thee be dommed!" he exclaimed, with increased emphasis.

I tried all kinds of cajolery; I used all the most orthodox means for persuading an obstinate elector; and I even entreated him to give me his vote, or at least to remain neuter during the contest: but my cajoling, my persuasions, and my entreaties were answered with a uniform "Thee be dommed!" At last I began to lose my temper.

"At any rate, Mr. Bull," said I, rather warmly, "I think a little civility would be a great improvement to you."

"Thee be dommed!" he replied; and puffed away at his pipe with more vigour than ever.

"There is a way to punish such insolence, sir," I exclaimed more angrily.

"Thee be dommed!" shouted the Radical.

Mephistophiles laughed; the dog growled; but John Bull did not move a muscle of his face. In spite of his great bulk, and the sharp fangs of his ugly beast, I had a great inclination to knock the man down.

"It would be doing a service to society to make an example of you, merely to show persons of your stamp that gentlemen are not to be insulted with impunity!" said I, in a perfect passion.

"Thee be dommed!" he answered, in that quiet, contemptuous tone of voice he had continued to use from his first exclamation.

This was too much. My blood boiled with indignation at his impertinence, and I was just on the point of rushing towards him for the purpose of putting my threat into execution, when Mephistophiles, who seemed to enjoy the whole as a very good joke, caught hold of my arm, and while I was wondering at the detention, he advanced before me and addressed the Radical. Mr. Bull listened and smoked.

"My good sir," exclaimed Mephistophiles, in his most winning manner, "you must pardon my young friend here for the apparent warmth with which he has met that honest bluntness of manner that distinguishes you from the servile wretches who are ever thrusting such sincerity and goodness, as it is well known you possess, out of the way. Mr. Herbert is a gentleman of liberal principles, and acknowledged integrity. He would not have solicited your suffrage, but he felt great indignation at the manner in which you have been treated by the party you have honoured with your support. It may not, perhaps, be known to you, my worthy sir, that you, who are considered all over the country the most influential, the most active, and the most deserving of the partisans of Sir Steadfast Folly, have been passed over with contempt, while such a man as Weazle, a person of no credit, a mere man of straw, possesses a seat among the committee."

"Eh! what?" exclaimed the farmer, dashing down his pipe into the fire, and starting up from his seat with a look of surprise and indignation. "Thee doesn't zay zo, man? It be'ant true, zure? Domm my bootuns! What, Weazle! that sneaking, palavering, methody hoombug, that

aren't a got scarcely a rag to coever his room ! he be placed on the committee, and I weren't axed ! No, no ; they durstn't do it !"

It was well known to Mephistophiles that Weazle and John Bull had long been bitter enemies.

"I have here a printed list of Sir Steadfast's committee," said I, handing it to the incensed Radical, "and it is much at your service, my good sir. My principal reason for calling upon you was to entreat you to become one of my committee, on which the many excellent qualities you possess will confer honour !"

"Thankee, squoire ! thankee koindly !" said the farmer, glancing his eye hurriedly over the list. "Eh ! here it be, sure enough. Benjamin Weazle. Domm my bootuns ! what do he do among respectable folk. I think Zur Steadfast moight have been as civil as to have axed my advoice."

"But, my worthy friend," remarked Mephistophiles, "how could you expect such a thing ? Did you not request Sir Steadfast not to ride over your fields when the seed was coming up, and did he not the next morning lead the whole hant through a field of young corn ?"

"That be true enough," replied John Bull. "He spoilt me a capital crop o' barley ; cut the hedge quoite shameful ; and then never said so much as, 'I ax your pardon.' He were never moy friend, or he'd a given that feller Weazle a flea in his ear, afore he'd a made 'un one of his committee. I wunt stand it. I'll teach em who's who ! Domm my bootuns ! must respectable folk as farms their own land be shoved aside to make room for a pauper like Weazle !"

The conclusion of all this was, that John Bull, Mephistophiles, and myself, sat round the little table, smoked our pipes, shared the home-brewed, and explained our political opinions ; and the Radical was so well satisfied with my principles, that he immediately joined my committee, took an active share in the canvass, and was instrumental in producing the great majority that placed me at the head of the first day's poll. My election was secure ; so much so, that in the evening my opponent resigned the contest.

I was chaired the next day, amid the enthusiastic revelries of the multitude, to the great gratification of Mr. Timothy Whisp, who gave evidence of the singular fancy that distinguished him, by making a speech to the people,

in which he congratulated the opposite party that they had been *done brown*. John Bull did not fail on the occasion to show his superiority over "that feiler Weazole," whom he caused to be serenaded by all the old pots and tin kettles in the neighbourhood. I, of course, did not conceal the triumph I had achieved. I went through the usual course of speechifying, gave a grand dinner and a grand ball to my principal supporters, and left the borough by far the most popular member it had ever returned.

CHAPTER VI.

Mephistophiles presents me with a magic mirror, by the aid of which I learn some extraordinary things.—The wicked manner in which I am tempted to revenge myself upon Dora for the duplicity with which I discover she has acted towards me ; and its strange result.

MEPHISTOPHILES and myself had been sitting discussing my future intentions till long after midnight, in an antique chamber of the family mansion I used as a study, an apartment of Gothic origin, with painted window, polished oak floor, and a profusion of grotesque carvings upon the panels and ceiling. A pause ensued in the conversation. I had drunk deeply of sundry flasks of old-wine that had long been hoarded in my uncle's cellars, but which my good friend Mrs. Cordial had persuaded the butler to send up to me, and the empty bottles stood before us on a curious table of ancient workmanship. The chairs on which we sat were equally strange in their fashion. Everything around me seemed to evince the taste of our Norman ancestors. I placed my *meerschaum* on the table, and, leaning back in the chair, gave my mind up to reflection. Mephistophiles sat opposite smoking.

The knowledge of Dora's treachery came like a blight upon the few good feelings that lay enshrined within my heart ; and I felt as if there was nothing in the world worth living for, unless it tended to the gratification of my passions or assisted in the realization of my ambition. I turned my thoughts towards Lady Julia ; and a glow, like that of a

flood of sunshine bursting through a cloud, seemed created within me by the mere imagination of her beauty. I felt dizzy with delight. I then began to imagine the result of my first successful exertion in search of political renown, and visions of future greatness rose in splendour before me. Yet from these bright dreams I found myself continually returning to think of Dora. Like the homesick mariner, who, weary of wandering in far-off climes, sees in the boundless and unfathomable waves that stretch illimitably before his eyes, the green fields and blooming gardens of his native valleys, I, having travelled over the gladdening regions of fancy, looked upon the dark space that intervened between me and felicity, and saw there love, and faithfulness, and glimpses of the immortal truth; and signs of those verdant springs and blossoming hopes which throw freshness and purity around the home of the erratic spirit. I began to doubt that Dora had deceived me. It was so contrary to all I had anticipated from my knowledge of her character.

"You are thinking of that immaculate girl again!" exclaimed Mephistophiles, in the scoffing tone so habitual to him. "Ha! how natural it is for those who have a high opinion of their own wisdom, having formed a judgment which is erroneous, to find a difficulty in their efforts to persuade themselves they have been deceived. They will not be convinced. They will not lessen their confidence in their own judgment. Women are great adepts in the art of deception. Like the ferocity of the cat, the viciousness of the woman is often well concealed, but never totally eradicated. Yet both are animals considered exceedingly useful for domestic purposes. Women will show many virtues, as long as no temptation to vice exists. They may be perfect creatures in the eyes of the lover—angels if you will; but move them to another sphere, where there is a greater degree of moral danger, and their excellence melts away like snow before a fire. I will prove this to you." He drew from his vest a flat piece of metal of a singular shape, with a rude handle to it. Round a circle, formed of twisted snakes, were placed many strange characters, of the meaning of which I was ignorant. "This," said he, "is a MAGIC MIRROR, in which you may be enabled to see anything you desire. Probably you have heard of these things,

as they were, some centuries since, in much request by the most skilful necromancers. If you wish to try their efficacy, I must warn you against making any exclamation during the performance of the charm. Perfect silence is necessary to complete success when you make an experiment ; a word will cause its immediate failure. You are desirous of knowing in what employment your cousin has recently been engaged. Lead me the bottle given you in the Brocken, at the witches' jubilee."

I had always carried about me the strange little vial of which I had become possessed at my initiation into the mysteries of spiritual things, intending at a proper opportunity to make use of it to my advantage. The time seemed now to have arrived. He poured out of the bottle three drops of the fearful liquor it contained, which fell within the circle upon the plate ; and as soon as they touched the metal, three columns of smoke arose of a peculiarly aromatic odour. I gazed on in silence and amazement. Soon the vapour dispersed, and I began to observe moving objects as if within a mirror. They were at first shadowy and indistinct, but in a very short time I could distinguish a large room with fluted pillars round it. On the left hand side was a raised orchestra of small dimensions, in which a band of musicians were performing. The apartment was thronged with persons of distinction of both sexes, whose features were familiar to me. Most of them were dancing. It appeared to me as if all who were worthy of admiration in rank, fashion, and beauty, had congregated in one spot—and that place I recognised as Almack's. Most prominent among the dancers I discovered Dora and the young viscount. Both seemed flushed with the exercise, and each seemed equally to enjoy the presence of the other. I could have turned from the sight and cursed them in the bitterness of my heart, but a strange fascination bound my eyes to the mirror, and I gazed on with smothered imprecations in my breast. The dance concluded, and I saw Lord Lupin whisper something in my cousin's ear. She looked displeased and confused—presently he whispered again, and she appeared less displeased and evinced more confusion—again he murmured his hated request, and her looks expressed assent, though deep blushes crimsoned her cheek. They left the room. A slight cloud now seemed to pass over the mirror and

when it had disappeared, I observed my detested rival and the deceitful Dora proceeding down a flight of stairs, pass through a throng of servants who waited in the hall, and from thence into a carriage that stood near the door. A thin veil of mist again prevented me for a few seconds observing their proceedings. Again I saw them in a chariot, drawn by four fleet horses going at the height of their speed, proceeding along the north road. Her hand was in his, and his arm was round her waist. She looked disquietude—he rapture. Presently he spoke, seemingly with a passionate eloquence, and his eyes kindled with the fires of his detested love. The disquiet left her features, and she looked more satisfied. He rapturously kissed her hand, and she, smiling, drew it coyly away. By heaven ! he raised his lips to hers ; and she, with slight reluctance, yielded them to his caresses ! I could endure it no longer. I found that I loved too well to see her become the prize of another. As I gazed upon the amorous scene before me, my blood went rushing at my breast with the impetuous force of the mountain torrent. I felt maddened with rage. "Ten thousand furies !" I exclaimed aloud, as I attempted to dash towards the loving pair and interrupt their happiness. In a moment the vision disappeared, and I beheld nothing but the metal plate.

"The charm is broken !" said Mephistopheles calmly ; "your rashness has destroyed all."

"By heaven and hell !" I shouted in an ungovernable phrensy of passion, as I clutched Mephistopheles by the arm, "I must be revenged !"

"That is in your power !" said the tempter.

"How ? Show me the way ! If it sinks me to everlasting perdition, I will do it ! Fool that I was ! to have been so easily deluded by a designing woman, a crocodile, a siren, a—"

"A common case !" remarked my companion, in a consolatory tone. "But you were warned. I hinted to you more than once that you were deceived."

"You did ! you did !" I replied with bitterness.

"Well, I am ready to assist the wronged. I am naturally fond of justice !" observed Mephistopheles, sneeringly.

"Listen ! your cousin is now in her chamber, where her youthful bridegroom will shortly join her."

"My curse be upon him !" I exclaimed.

"By the exercise of my art I can transport her in a sound sleep into this apartment. I leave the rest to you."

"Let it be done quickly!" said I, with unnatural exultation.

"I am your slave in all things. Your will is my law!" he exclaimed, with apparent humility. "Still it is but right I should inform you, that if you allow the present opportunity to pass-by, it will not be in my power to offer another of a similar nature. Your revenge, to be perfect, must be immediate."

"Your caution is unnecessary—keep it for those who want it." I replied scornfully. "Hasten the work, for I am impatient."

Mephistophiles strode into the centre of the apartment. Pointing his finger towards a certain part of the floor, and muttering some unintelligible words, there immediately arose a couch, on which reclined the form of Dora. He then retired to a dark part of the room, from whence I could see his eyes gleaming like two blazing meteors, above the shadowy outline of his body. I hastened towards the conch, and bent in silent admiration over the unconscious form of my slumbering victim. At this instant she awoke. As she glanced round the room in fear and wonder, her eyes falling upon mine, and recognising me with a smile of the most divine expression, full of goodness, fondness, welcome, and sincerity, she flung herself into my arms. I was unprepared for this. I expected that she would exhibit signs of guilt. The treachery of which she had been guilty ought, I thought, to make her ready to sink with confusion at my appearance; but her looks bore no trace of dread; and although she seemed greatly surprised, her astonishment was too evidently mingled with joy to be unpleasant to her. As I gazed on her radiant eyes and transparent complexion, so soft, so pure, so feminine, I could not help feeling a doubt, that such perfect innocence of manner was the work of deceit. At this moment a voice, whose supernatural and piercing tones I too well knew, exclaimed "REMEMBER!"

Instantly the scenes I had observed in the magic mirror recurred to my recollection, and my diabolical determination was revived with increased strength. I raised her in my arms, and gazed on her face as if I would read the most hidden secrets of her soul. She smiled at my stern scrutiny.

There was so much sweetness, confidence, and devotion in the expression of her pale features, that I paused in my investigation, as if still incredulous of her treachery. Again that accursed voice came thrilling through my veins, muttering the word "BEWARE!"

Immediately I began to suspect that she was still affecting that guilelessness which first deceived me, and jealousy and revenge again assumed their empire within my bosom. Dora gazed on me with wonder, yet did not seem to have the least suspicion of evil. The fondness with which she at first regarded me, did not for a moment leave her gentle countenance. She appeared as if unconscious of danger. She feared no harm. Her looks seemed to say, with *you* near me I *must* be safe. So little alarmed was she that when my hot face approached hers, and I polluted her sweet mouth with my sinful caresses, she pressed her dear lips on mine with a delicacy so exquisite and so natural, that I once more hesitated in my ungodly purpose.

"HASTEN!" exclaimed the tempter, in a voice that stirred up my unhallowed passion with fresh fury.

I grasped her rudely. I was proceeding to greater violence, and more evident crime, when, with looks all horror-struck, her cheek pale as marble, her eyes filled with tears, and her hands clasped in supplication, she vanished from before me, and I fell with considerable force upon the floor.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAPTER I.

I find the disclosures of the magic mirror correct.—I am anxious to obtain popularity, and the measures I take to bring myself before the public.—Mephistophiles becomes a general favourite.—The curious manner in which he punishes the Emperor of all the Conjurors.

I RECEIVED a letter from my uncle, in reply to the one I had sent him announcing my success, in which, after congratulating me on the important triumph I had gained, he proceeded in this strain :—

“ The result of your election is valuable in another point of view. It proves that the country is arriving at a proper sense of the value of good government. The return of a Conservative member will teach a great moral lesson to the experimenting Whigs and mischievous Radicals. It is an unquestionable sign of a powerful reaction. Haste, my dear Vincent, and take possession of your seat in the House. I am most anxious for your *début*. Have ever before your eyes the glorious example of the great William Pitt, that heaven-born minister ; and I have not the least doubt that our party will quickly oust the detestable faction who have too long disgraced the government of the country.”

With much in a similar strain, and continual allusion to the genius of “ the great William Pitt,” my uncle concluded his epistle. However, there was some intelligence in the postscript, which I then thought of more consequence than anything that had preceded it.

“ I have just heard that Dora is not to be found. She went last night with the marchioness to Almack’s, and did not return home. It is supposed that that young scapegrace, Lupin, knows something of the subject, for they have both disappeared. Although I do not think it a disadvantageous match, I did hope that you had been her choice ; but women are very changeable. I think it was the opinion of the

great William Pitt, that women are not to be trusted in political matters ; yet are not to be dispensed with as members of the community."

This was conclusive of her elopement, and of the accuracy of the magic mirror ; therefore, I determined to dismiss my cousin from my memory, as one unworthy farther consideration.

I did not, however, return to town as speedily as Lord Melcombe desired, but spent my time in visiting various parts of the country, stopping at the residences of the most influential land proprietors, and took an active share in the sports and politics of the country. I also made considerable progress in a work I intended for the press. It was my object to create popularity, and I therefore resolved to take advantage of every circumstance which would keep me in a conspicuous place before the public eye.

Mephistophiles was always my companion. As a foreigner of distinction, all persons seemed inclined to pay him great respect ; but he used the art of satisfying every taste with such success, that he became a universal favourite. The country gentleman admired his crack shooting, his fearless riding, and his knowledge of sporting subjects. The town exquisites praised his taste in dress, his fashionable deportment, and his sarcastic wit. The married ladies commenced platonic attachments ; the single began flirtations with him equally innocent. While mothers were poring over maps of Germany in search of his estates, daughters were composing sentimental sonnets in praise of his mustaches. His name became everywhere the rage ; and every thing the German prince said or did was immediately considered deserving of universal comment. He usually contrived to create some little mischief among his admirers. Sometimes the evil was trifling in extent ; at other times it produced more effect ; but it never was suspected that he was in any way connected with its infliction. His tricks, though generally confined to the higher classes of society, were sometimes played upon persons of a more humble station.

I remember that we were once taking a stroll into a country town, when our attention was attracted by a caravan, completely covered on one side by a large piece of painted canvass, on which, in glaring colours, was represented a man

of gigantic size, in an oriental costume, waving a wand, while around him imps of every form and colour seemed thronging to do his bidding. A group of rustics, plough-boys, servants, women, and children, were staring with open mouths and wondering eyes at this huge picture, while an old pimple-faced woman turned a barrel-organ deplorably out of tune ; and a little boy, with inflamed eyes, shouted through a speaking-trumpet the following oration, laying particular emphasis on all the most insignificant words :—

“ Walk in ladies *and* gentlemen ! *and* see the wonderful Fee Foo Fum, the Emperor of all the Conjurers. He challenges any individual *for* a thousand guineas, *to perform* the extraordinary things he will show you *for* the small price of one penny. He cures the toothache ; also *the mange* in dogs ; removes warts *from* the hands, and corns *from* the feet ; and other things as be’ant comfortable, he takes away in the surprisingest manner, all *for* the small charge *of* one peany. He will discover goods as *is* lost, *and tell fortunes* ; show any lady who be her future husband, and tell any gentleman the name *of* his sweetheart, all *for* the small charge *of* one penny. Walk in, ladies and gentlemen, *and see* the wonderfulllest exhibition as ever was exhibited, all *for* the small charge *of* one penny.”

Two or three young girls wished to avail themselves of the opportunity of seeing their future husbands, and an old woman wanted to recover a lost spoon ; the boots of the Blue Posts was anxious to get rid of his warts, and the driver of the London wagon was equally desirous of parting company with an obstinate corn. These proceeded up half a dozen narrow steps, paid their pennies to the woman with the organ, and disappeared behind a ragged blanket hung over the door as a curtain. Mephistophiles and I followed.

We entered the interior, and found ourselves in an apartment of moderate dimensions, crowded with farmers’ labourers of both sexes, old and young, and a few of the poorer sort of trades-people and servants belonging to the town. They respectfully made way for us as we advanced, touched their hats or courtesied, and by their politeness we were allowed to stand in the front rank of the spectators. In an elevated part of this chamber stood a man with the most sinister-looking squint I ever saw. His head was enveloped in a dirty shawl by way of a turban ; he wore a

flowing robe, that perhaps had once been a dressing-gown, tied round his waist with a red sash, and covered with emblematical devices ; full Turkish trousers, spangled and soiled, with a pair of dingy yellow boots, completed his costume. Over his head hung a stuffed alligator. Upon a little table before him, covered with a black cloth, lay a large book, on the broad pages of which were observed sundry strange characters painted in red, and black, and yellow —near it were a human scull, an hourglass, a pack of cards and several other strange things. The room was lined with representations of demons in the midst of flame, ghosts rising from the tomb, skeletons, and a few other horrors.

The great Fee Fo Fum, the Emperor of all the Conjurers, after a speech to his audience, in which he vaunted his own super-excellence as a conjurer, exhibited several tricks with cards that greatly excited the astonishment of the rustics ; a variety of other feats of legerdemain were then performed, at which the people gazed with still greater wonder. At first they laughed at the low humour with which the tricks of the conjurer were accompanied ; but when more extraordinary matters invited their attention, they looked on in silent amazement. Many were too frightened to speak—some would have given any thing to be safe at home—all gazed on the horrible things around them in fear and suspicion—not a smile was to be seen. I was much amused at the impudence of the impostor, and scarcely less at the variety of expression seen in the different faces around me. Mephistophiles was evidently meditating mischief.

The great Fee Fo Fum observing the effect he had produced, seemed desirous of taking advantage of it. He approached his audience, and they drew back in alarm.

“ Does any gentleman here wish to find his head in his breeches’ pocket ? ” inquired the Emperor of all the Conjurers.

Every gentleman turned pale at the thought, and the dead silence which prevailed expressed that the company thought their heads would be more comfortable upon their shoulders.

“ Would any lady desire to be turned into a sucking pig ? ” was then asked.

It was evident that no lady had any such inclination, for however plain some of them might be in their looks, they

thought of the pig-faced lady ; and in a dreadful state of alarm that the transformation might be made without their consent, they held their tongues.

"Should any of the company feel inclined to see the spirit of any departed person, they will be kind enough to say so," continued the same speaker.

A shudder went round the room expressive of a decided dislike to disturb the dead.

"I have one more offer to make you, ladies and gentlemen," said the conjurer, as he waved a long white wand round about in a mysterious manner. "If it be your good pleasure, I will immediately raise the devil."

"O no, maister, not by no means!" eagerly exclaimed, with a tremulous voice, an old gray-headed countryman in a smock-frock, while all his companions trembled with fear, and cast sidelong looks at the door.

"As you please," replied the great Fee Fo Fum, with admirable coolness. "But there are many strange sights belonging to this exhibition I should like to show you. I am willing to eat any gentleman in two mouthfuls who will be kind enough to submit to the experiment." Here there was a simultaneous shrinking back of every individual in the room. "Or I will show you," he continued, "a few other equally amusing tricks. I will take off my right leg, and use my little toe as a toothpick : I will change my body into the form of a ferocious tiger ; or I will unscrew my head, and throw it about as if it were a ball." Here there was a general movement towards the door. I had my eye upon the conjurer ; and, to my inexpressible astonishment, I saw, as he concluded the last sentence, his head leap off his shoulders into his hands, and then bound up into the air ! This was too much for the frightened bumpkins. A universal rush was made towards the blanket ; and, with terrified looks, screams, shouts, and every exclamation of fear, they tumbled over one another down the steps. The old woman and the little boy looked in to see what was the matter, but as soon as they beheld the state of the case, they vanished with more rapidity than any one of the audience. What made the affair still more strange, the great Fee Fo Fum began lustily to bawl out—

"Stop my head ! stop my head ! Good people, lay hold of it ! Put it in its place ! O dear, what shall I do ? For mercy's sake, stop my head!"

But the head still continued to bound up and down from the hands to the ceiling ; and the people, if they turned their eyes towards the sight, only with increased terror redoubled their attempts to get out of the way. It was a most ludicrous scene. The trunk of the poor conjurer was sinking with fright into a chair, while the arms were making ineffectual attempts to detain the fugitive head. Up it flew, turban and all, while the eyes squinted more forbiddingly than ever : every feature expressed the most intense horror, and the mouth continued to shout, "Stop my head ! stop my head !"

Still the eccentric member bobbed up and down with an energy that appeared never likely to decrease. The men and women, in their efforts to escape, only prevented each other from getting out of the room. Some were sprawling on the floor, kicking and shrieking—others tumbling head foremost out of the caravan. Bonnets were abandoned, shawls torn, jackets rent in two ; but in the midst of all this confusion a voice was heard, shouting—

" Stop my head, pray, good people ! I'll give any one all I'm worth in the world to stop my head. I'm no conjurer ! Indeed I'm not ! I'm only a poor miserable lawyer's clerk, that ran away from my wife and eleven children. Stop my head ! I'll never attempt conjuring again, if I live 'till Doomsday. Stop my head ! Here's a pretty go !" continued the unfortunate head, with tears in its eyes, as it jumped from his hands to the ceiling. "Here's my head going up and down like a steam-engine, and I can't stop it ! O Lord ! O Lord ! what *shall* I do ? Will nobody stop my head ? A precious mess I've made of it ! A pretty figure I cut ! O dear me, what would my poor wife say ? Stop my head !" he shouted again.

The head screamed its entreaties to be stopped, but the louder became its vociferations, the more rapid became its motion. Confession was made of numerous faults, promises were repeated of a complete reformation, and every sentence concluded with the exclamation, "Stop my head !" shouted with all the force of his lungs. Mephistopheles stood apart, looking unconcernedly at the mischief he had caused, and I had laughed till I was almost unable to move. There was no one else in the room : all had made their escape, with the uncomfortable addition of a few bruises. I thought the

poor fellow had been punished sufficiently, and requested Mephistophiles to replace his flighty member. I had no sooner spoken than his shoulders regained their burden. Directly the man felt that his head was restored to its proper place, he first putt up his hands to convince himself of the fact, and then, without casting a look around him, he made a dive under the blanket, cleared the steps at a bound, flew through the town with the speed of a hunted fox; and from that day to this nothing more of the great Fee Fo Fum, the Emperor of all the Conjurers, has ever been heard.

CHAPTER II.

Mephistophiles in Melton Mowbray, and some account of fox-hunting in the Quorn country.

I RETURNED to town, took possession of my seat in the House, and received the congratulations of my friends, among whom Lady Julia's were the most welcome. I showed her the MS. of my intended work, and her praises of it were of the most tender and flattering kind. By her direction I placed it in the hands of an influential publisher, who assured me it should go to press immediately. I saw my uncle very seldom. He was in raptures at my triumph, spoke of the leaders of his party, and of "the great William Pitt," but never mentioned the name of Dora. I thought it strange that he should so studiously avoid a subject which I supposed to be of the utmost interest to him; but as I did not like to enter into any conversation about the shameful deception that had been practised upon me, I was glad that the subject was avoided. Lord Melcombe presented me at court, and the king, I thought, received me very graciously. As parliament was soon afterward prorogued, I was glad that I only had occasion to vote on one or two unimportant questions; my policy being to see into the nature of parties before I attempted to take any prominent political station.

As it was the hunting season, I made a short visit to Melton Mowbray. But it was not so much with a desire

to enjoy the sport, as to strengthen a friendly intimacy I had first formed at Lady Julia's with the Duke of Cottesmore, an old sporting nobleman of great political influence, that I made a brief stay in the neighbourhood. His grace's princely mansion was situated in the centre of the hunt, and I was welcomed to it with a hospitality which strongly reminded me of the better times of English manners. He possessed the finest stud of hunters and the best kennel of fox-hounds in the world, and nothing gave him so much satisfaction as a fine chase. Hunting was almost his sole occupation ; he thought of little else ; he talked of little else ; he dreamed of little else. He cared not for politics when it interfered with his favourite pursuit. All the news that it was necessary for him to know, he heard from his valet while arranging his toilet ; but he would sooner listen to a narrative of a hard run, related by his first whipper-in, Jack Bounce (as strange a character as his master), than pay attention to an account of the most interesting debate that had ever filled the columns of "*The Times*." To make him a warm friend and a steady supporter was my sole object in coming to Melton, and I did not fail in my intentions.

The first morning I went out with the hounds there was a splendid field of sportsmen, all thorough Meltonians, dressed in the best style, and mounted on the finest animals in the country. They were all grouped about early in the morning ; some tightening girths, some mounting : grooms were in attendance leading off hacks, on which their masters had ridden to the place of meeting, who were now seated on thorough-bred hunters. The hounds had been thrown into cover, and were concealed among the furze. All was expectation and anxiety. The duke looked at his watch ; he was getting fidgety. The backs of a few hounds became visible in the gorse, and one or two stole out ; but Jack Bounce gave his whip a smack, and exclaimed, "Into cover, Filewood !—back, Sneezer !" and the dogs disappeared immediately.

"I've an idea that we shan't find this morning," observed Lord Martingale, a young exquisite who had recently set up a hunting establishment in the neighbourhood.

"There's no fox here, I think!" remarked Sir Harry Crupper, taking an enormous pinch of rappee, and handing the box to his neighbour.

" Suppose we try yonder bed of osiers ?" said the Honourable Captain Flourish, lighting a cigar.

" Patience, gentlemen, patience !" exclaimed the duke, good-humouredly. " I would wager a cool hundred, that in five minutes the fox will be as much in a hurry as yourselves."

" Done," said Lord Albany, another exquisite of the modern school.

Every eye was now attracted towards the cover by the strong agitation of the furze in one direction. It began to shake as if a hurricane was passing over it. A few hounds were observed leaping rapidly through the gorse.

" Have at him, hounds !" shouted the duke, in an ecstasy of delight.

The cover became more violently disturbed. Every one made preparations for a start. The duke looked again at his watch, and then uttered a yell which one would have supposed might be heard in the other world. The horses appeared almost unmanageable, and exhibited as much impatience as their owners.

" Hark ! hark to Brilliant !" shouted the huntsman to an old hound that uttered a faint challenge, as he raised his head above the mass of herbage by which he was nearly concealed. In a few seconds the deep-toned musical cry was repeated more distinctly by another dog ; it was echoed here and there and everywhere ; and in a moment the full chorus of the whole pack burst forth.

" Tally ho !" shouted a Quaker-looking, middle-aged gentleman, whom I took to be a neighbouring squire.

" There he goes !" screamed a ploughboy in a stunted alder-tree, as he pointed to the next field, where something was seen stealing rapidly by the side of the hedge.

And now the delightful music swelled upon the gale.

Out came the dogs in full cry, their noses to the ground, their tails in the air, and leaping over one another's backs as if they were mad. A rush was made by the horsemen.

" Ware hounds ! ware hounds !" exclaimed Jack Bounce.

" Hold hard, gentlemen, and for God's sake don't ride over the dogs," shouted the duke.

" Give 'em time !" said the squire.

Only three or four couple of hounds appeared to have taken the right scent ; the rest were mixed up in the crowd of

horses, in what I thought inextricable confusion ; but Jack Bounce and his assistant soon sent them on the right track after their companions, and I presently saw them all so close together, that you might have covered them with a sheet, and going at a killing pace over the very field in which the countryman had discovered the fox.

In an early part of the chase some of the exquisites were unhorsed, but no one stopped to pick them up. We were going over hedge and ditch ; gate and brook ; through ploughed fields and narrow lanes ; up steep banks and down rugged hills, at a pace that tried the mettle of our steeds ; and which no horse, unless his pedigree be untainted, can maintain for five minutes. In the first rank was the Duke of Cottesmore, whose fine manly figure sat well on a magnificent blood-horse, full sixteen hands high, that cleared every thing in the finest style. Near him were Mephistophiles and myself. Close behind rode the Squire, Jack Bounce, and Sir Harry Crupper. Several others were near at hand, and in the surrounding fields were seen the rest of the field hastening on in different directions—some trying to cut across ; others hastening to meet their second horse ; and at a little distance, two or three spirited hunters were observed at full gallop without riders.

"Your friend rides well," exclaimed his grace, as he turned his head to observe how Mephistophiles made a leap we had just passed. "That's a very ugly fence. I never saw a foreigner do the thing in such good style. Your horse too is as fine a thorough-bred as I ever saw."

Ah ! thought I, if he had seen us going up the Brocken, he would not appear surprised at our present proceedings. We both rode the same coal-black coursers that had carried us to the Witch's Jubilee.

The fox led us an amazing distance, and tried all the arts for which he is famous, in endeavouring to escape from his pursuers. He entered a farmyard, sought shelter in a garden, ran along the top of a narrow wall, and by short turns and various other manœuvres tried hard to throw the dogs off the scent ; but he was betrayed in every instance, and he again took to the open field, in the hope of finding safety in a distant coppice.

Very few of the field were now visible. The Duke of Cottesmore had succeeded in finding his second horse, and as I still kept by his side, the delay occasioned by my wait-

ing for him threw us considerably in the rear, so much so that we lost sight of the hounds. Seeing, however, two or three red-coats in the distance, we went forward at a tremendous pace in that direction. Just as I was on the point of dashing at a double quickset hedge, appropriately strengthened with a few stiff elders, in sporting phraseology termed a *rasper*, I heard a voice familiar to me exclaim,

"Steer to the larboard! steer to the larboard! shift your helm, or you'll run foul o'me, by God!" As I could not see any one, I continued on my course; and as I made the leap, I observed in the middle of the hedge beneath me, kicking and sprawling like a porpoise in a pail, my old acquaintance Sir Antler Taffrail. His face was so scratched that I should scarcely have known him. He screamed with fright, and kicked his thick legs about with all his strength when he saw me coming upon the very place where he lay; but I passed over his body without doing him any injury.

"Who is that," inquired the duke.

I told him. It seemed that the admiral's character was well known in the neighbourhood, where he occasionally made his appearance; and his evil stars having induced him to join the hunt, he was deposited in his present situation, from whence he could not escape, and was ridden over by every one of the field who had taken that leap. I heard afterward that some farm labourers extricated him from his perilous position.

We were now going over an extensive ploughed field, which led towards a narrow lane. The only outlet was a five-barred gate placed on the top of a high slippery bank. I went over it; the duke immediately followed, but his horse slipped as he took the leap, splintered off the top of the gate, and fell with great force into the lane, pitching his rider far over his head against the opposite bank. I thought both were killed, for they lay without motion. I instantly alighted and paid every attention to his grace. His hunting-cap had been knocked on one side, and exposed his short silvery hair, and his fine ruddy face was almost covered with dirt. To my great satisfaction, not many minutes elapsed before I observed signs of returning life.

"Where's Nimrod?" were the first words he uttered, as, in a state of considerable weakness, he tried to walk.

We then examined the horse. At that moment the full of the hounds were heard, and the animal started to its

legs with a violent shake and a loud snorting. "Ah!" exclaimed the duke as he eagerly remounted, "Nimrod, like his master, is not much the worse for his tumble."

I used every argument I could think of to dissuade my companion from continuing the chase, fully convinced that he was more hurt than he would acknowledge; seeing, too, by a deep graze in the hind leg of the horse, that Nimrod was in no state to second his master's inclination. But both appeared too fond of the sport to relinquish it while they possessed life sufficient to carry it on.

At the top of the lane we leaped through a low hedge, and found ourselves in a turnip-field formed upon a hill. We had also the gratification of observing, about half a dozen fields off, the whole pack in full cry, with only two horsemen before us, one of whom was about two fields off, the other close to the bounds. This sight gave us fresh energy. The horses started off at the top of their speed, and we were not long before we were in the same field with the last Meltonian. His hunter was evidently too jaded to stand it much longer; his wind was gone, but he had too much blood in him to give up the game. We saw him attempt an ugly ox-fence, then heard a tremendous shock, and both horse and rider suddenly disappeared. We were quickly passing over the same spot, and saw the squire (for it was he) examining the same gray gelding upon which he had at first taken the field. He had missed his second horse, and had continued the chase on the spirited little animal that now lay stiff upon the ground. We had no time to offer consolation, but speeded on till we approached the next rider. It was Mephistopheles. "The prince rides famously!" exclaimed the duke rapturously, as he watched him going over every thing with the most perfect ease; "It is a thousand pities he's not an Englishman!"

We soon came up with him; and as he slackened his speed to speak to me, the duke passed him, saying, "Severe run this—never saw finer sport—capital horse that of yours!" Just then about six couple of the leading hounds dashed through an open gateway on our right, staring around them, and displaying other well-known symptoms of having viewed their game, and in a few minutes afterward poor reynard, with blackened mouth, soiled skin, tongue out, and brush hanging down, was seen slowly crawling

from the midst of a flock of sheep, among which he had taken momentary refuge. The duke spurred his almost-exhausted horse to renewed exertion. Nimrod cleared the hedge in good style, staggered a few paces towards the dogs, and, as his rider leaped off his back, he rolled on his side, his big heart panted with convulsive force, a strong shiver shook his muscular body, his eyes became fixed, his nostrils distended, and the next moment the noble animal was beyond all hope of recovery. The duke appeared, for a few moments, affected by the death of his favourite ; but he was too much of a sportsman to regard an accident of such common occurrence with deep or long-continued feeling. Securing the brush, he gave a *whoo whoop* so loud and shrill, that I involuntarily put my hands to my ears to shut out the stunning sound.

In a short time Jack Bounce joined his master, and viewed Nimrod with a most doleful physiognomy. Others made their appearance soon after, but nearly all looked very different from what they were when they first started. Few had escaped without a fall ; some had had several, and their neat coats and clean breeches were none the better for coming in contact with the ground. The horses were thoroughly exhausted. It was the opinion of the field that so severe a run had never been known, and many went so far as to state that more capital sport it was impossible to have. After sufficient time had elapsed to refresh all parties, they quietly rode home to dinner.

"This is a specimen," said Mephistopheles to me as we rode home together, "of the most fashionable of English field-sports. Foxes are very destructive to the farmer, but are preserved, that noblemen and gentlemen may enjoy the pleasure of hunting them to death. In chase of this worthless vermin, whose flesh is not eatable, and the skin not worth flaying, the life of a noble animal, worth sometimes as much as four hundred guineas, is frequently sacrificed, and the neck of its rider, who is generally the greater beast of the two, as often placed in jeopardy. So enamoured are your young men of fortune of this harmless and creditable pastime, that they manage to spend between fifty and sixty thousand pounds a year in this neighbourhood solely by the expense attending upon killing foxes. Who will affirm, after this, that the rising generation are not remarkable for wisdom !"

CHAPTER III.

A conversation upon songs and song-writers during a ride over Salisbury Plain.—Mephistophiles' recollections of modern authors.—Smiggins.—The two Twaddles.—Omnipresence Flummery, Dr. Toddy, and Lickspittle.

"Who is he that travelleth over the world
 With his spear well poised, and his flag unfurled ?
 The old and the young he is ever among,
 To the fear of the weak and the dread of the strong.
 Now they tremble in their homes,
 For he comes—madly comes,
 With a shout like the roll of a thousand drums !
 Where he goeth, no one knoweth ;
 Whence he came, none can name ;—
 But he finds a delight on his steed of might
 To gallop abroad like a wandering knight,
 O'erthrowing whoe'er he may find.
 Who is he ? who is he ?
 So wild and so free !—
 'Tis the fierce north wind ! 'tis the fierce north wind !

"Who is he that rusheth through quarrels and wars,
 From the depths of the sea to the tops of the stars ?
 He liveth alone in a world of his own,
 Among halls of thick ice where the sun never shone ;
 And he comes on our earth
 To destroy all the worth
 Of the tree in its pride, and the flow'r in its birth.
 Where he flieth verdure dieth ;
 In his breath there is death ;
 But he loveth to chase, with a giant's fleet pace,
 The ship as she bounds o'er the Baltic's blue space,
 And soon leaves her helpless behind.
 Who is he ? who is he ?
 That now rushes on me ?—
 'Tis the fierce north wind ! 'tis the fierce north wind !"

Thus I sang as, in company with Mephistophiles, I rode rapidly over the barren desolation of Salisbury Plain, towards a nobleman's mansion in the neighbourhood, when the freezing breath of winter swept along like a hurricane, chilling one's blood with its piercing coldness.

"Bravely sung, master of mine!" exclaimed my companion, "and the song is not bad ; 'tis none of your water-gruel washes of maudlin sentiment and miserable twaddle with which your modern minstrelsy abounds. There is

something like spirit in the thing. Sing on! 'Tis but right you should be merry. All your glorious projects are ripening to a golden harvest. Great men are courting you; wise men look upon you approvingly; and beauty rewards you with her divinest smiles. You have become important in the eyes of the politician; the philosopher hails you as a brother; your love is prized and sought by the brightest and fondest of women. Of a truth you are a man to be envied. Sing on, then, for singing becomes you. Let those who cry, cry and be damned."

It was true I had reason to rejoice at the flattering appearance of my prospects: everything was according to my most sanguine wishes; the most influential characters in the kingdom regarded me as one who might be useful; my literary productions were universally read, and as generally praised; and Lady Julia, that beautiful and talented enthusiast; I felt assured, loved me with all the energy of her romantic nature.

"Ay!" continued Mephistopheles, rather in a satirical tone; "many a pretty bird at first admires wonderfully the golden wires by which it is caged, and sings with no small degree of satisfaction, while delighted with the splendour by which it is surrounded. But see! yonder is that puzzle of learned fools and blundering antiquaries, Stonehenge. Many a mad scene has been acted among those old stones, which men dream not of."

I gave a glance at the mystic circle, and thought a more fitting place for unholy deeds could scarcely be found in the country.

"'Tis not a most inviting spot for those canting hypocrites, the lovers of the picturesque!" said my companion; "but nature can be in the sulks when she pleases; and this place she has honoured with an everlasting frown. Here are no trickling rills, and balmy breezes, 'velvet sward and gentle valleys,' and other immaculate prettinesses which the Della Cruscans of the present day make of every stagnant ditch or barren field they meet. The man who travelled from Dan to Beersheba should come here. There seems no end to this desert. But, as our steeds are fleet, and our hearts joyful, instead of grumbling at the sublime consolation 'whatever is, is right,' suppose, as 'tis my turn, I endeavour to lessen the way and the weariness by a song?"

Without waiting for any reply, the singer commenced:—

KING MAMMON !

" On a blazing throne of gems and gold,
 The price of many a damned soul,
 There sat a king deformed and old,
 Yellow, and shrunk, and foul.
 The glitt'ring bribe—the tempting purse—
 Spread there their unresisted lure,
 For baits to prove the proud man's curse,
 And keep the miser poor.
 In his palsied hand the monarch gave
 The radiant stone and blushing ore,
 To mighty prince and grov'ling slave
 That knelt his throne before ;
 Gorging the food like worms i' the grave,
 And screaming loud for more,—
 Shouting ' Hail, oh first of the sons of Ammon !
 Hail to the GREAT KING MAMMON !'

" As among that cursed and greedy crew
 The *Murd'rer* thrust his blood-stained hands,
 Where *Beauty's* palms of lily hue
 The price of guilt demands,
 Sin caught the despot in her arms,
 And kiss'd his slimy jaws ;
 And *Shame* exposed her wanton charms
 To gain his prized applause.
 There the *hero* brought his hireling steel ;
 The *bard* his venal song ;
 While *patriots* sold the public weal,
 The *tyrants* cherished wrong ;
 Monks uttered blasphemies to kneel
 The favoured of that throng,—
 Shouting ' Hail, oh first of the sons of Ammon !
 Hail to the GREAT god MAMMON !'

" And they all devoured this precious food
 With hunger more than human zest ;
 Though bringing poison to the blood
 And anguish to the breast.
 Like vultures upon carion fare
 They greedily fed on,
 And fiercely seized their neighbour's share
 Whene'er their own was gone.
 As that crowned carc'e his gifts bestowed
 With regal pomp and pride,
 From those foul lips no language flowed,
 But still the dupes he eyed,
 Hurrying on to death's abode,
 And cursed them as they died,—
 Shouting ' Hail,..oh first of the sons of Ammon !
 Hail to the good KING MAMMON !'"

"Is that song to your taste, my master?" inquired the singer as he concluded.

"Not much, 'tis too inhuman," said I.

"Inhuman!" exclaimed Mephistopheles scornfully— "Would you have me raise your sympathies for 'a butterfly born in a bower?' or demand a lachrymose tribute from your sensibility in favour of a *soldier* (save the mark!) 'who wiped away a tear?'"

"Neither," said I. "I am as much an enemy to pathos and cant as yourself; but I consider that a song should express wholesome and natural sentiments, as far apart from crude conceits as from twaddling commonplace; the language should be poetical, the versification melodious, and the subject one which admits of the development of passion; appeals to feelings which should exist in every bosom; or contain a dramatic description of some object, or scene, or active emotions, or passive reflections in a certain situation, or belonging to a certain character, which the singer can understand, and the audience appreciate. Our song-writers of the present day are sadly deficient in energy. Campbell has written some glorious lyrics; so has Lockhart; they have life and strength, bone and muscle, about them: but both poets have long ceased to write songs."

"I shall not easily forget the first effects produced by the publication of Moore's Irish Melodies. In bower and boudoir, hall and study, they were heard coming lovingly upon the ear, and filling the heart with the most exciting and the most generous of human feelings. These songs gave an impulse to the study of the vocal art, which has since been followed up with unabating perseverance. I cannot forget the share they had in making me musical; nor the delight I have experienced in being enabled, by the possession of some natural advantages, to breathe into the ears and hearts of others the intense pleasure those songs conveyed to my own. The words were often gems of thought and fancy expressed in a style the best suited to their character: the melodies were mostly of that kind with which the mind soon grows familiar, yet never finds old. At their first appearance I was too much influenced by their seductiveness to think of criticism; but now I see defects where once I beheld nothing but beauties. The want of concentration in the expression of a sentiment, the too frequent use of meta-

phors unconnected with the subject, and a style of colouring in the diction which, from the phrases employed, might aptly be termed 'oriental tinting,' at once uncharacteristic and artificial, are among the most evident blemishes in the verses which have been written to the Irish melodies. Mr. Moore is exclusively the poet of the drawing-room. His muse is decked in satin robes and artificial flowers, walks upon a Persian carpet, and breathes Arabian odours.

"In lyrical poetry, the first object to be produced is the union of brevity of thought with melodious versification; for as the melody created by the composer is expected to be an interpretation of the meaning expressed by the poet, it naturally follows, that unless the subject originally is clearly defined, it cannot be much improved by the translation. The old poets appear to have been well convinced of the utility of condensation; for in nearly all their productions intended for music, may be observed a style of phraseology almost entirely divested of superfluous words, thoughts happy and original, and situations well conceived. Read some of the songs (truly they deserve the name) of Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Herrick, Withers, Carew, Suckling, and a dozen others. On how different a system some modern writers construct what they are pleased to call songs! The old school gave to the world full-grown sentiments, if I may express the term, in a musical and manly diction: the new school spins out a series of infantile commonplaces, in a sigh-away die-away set of words, as completely removed from any thing like common sense as from masculine feeling. Take away Barry Cornwall, (and, talented as he is, he might be deprived of a multitude of unnatural conceits), and the rest of your *lyrists*, as they call themselves, are 'leather and prunella.' They have neither the fire of Körner, nor the genius of Beranger. For my own part, I would sooner be the author of a few national songs, than have been the inventor of the steam engine."

"Spoken like an oracle!" exclaimed my companion. "Indeed your popular song-writers are a miserable set; but the arts they practise to get their rubbish into public notice are ingenious, if not laudable. How often do you find upon a piano some contemptible stuff of which a school-girl would be ashamed, demanding your admiration as the production of the honourable Mrs. So-and-so, 'written under

peculiar circumstances,' relating to a 'most affecting incident' in the life of the beautiful Lady Such-a-one. In nine cases out of ten these 'ballads of real life,' and their impudent puffs, are the manufacture of one Smuggins, who never wrote a line of poetry in his life—originally a peddling bookseller; but having been successful in some speculations upon the gullibility of human nature, he has since opened a music-shop, for the exclusive sale of his fashionable forgeries—wholesale and retail. This is the system on which he carries on the deception:—He pays some musician to compose a melody, and writes the words and publishes the song himself. But it is the circumstance that makes it successful. The song must have some connection with a subject then occupying the public mind. If a musical festival has been held at which the royal family, and most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom have attended, out comes something set to music with a title like—'I saw her in the Abbey Walls!' This title, with an explanatory statement, exquisitely ungrammatical, informing the public that the subject of the song was a young lady of such extraordinary beauty that 'the eyes of royalty' were fixed on her during the whole of the performances, is placarded conspicuously over all the dead walls in the country, and advertisements of the same description are printed in every newspaper. The fools run and buy. Every woman who was at the festival purchases, flattering herself that she must have been the object of royal observation; and every man has the same desire to possess the song, thinking his sister or his sweetheart must have been honoured with the king's notice. The poor dupes ought to know that the good old king, instead of looking after the girls, awoke every ten minutes from a royal nap to inquire of the Lord Chamberlain 'When that damned scraping would end?'"

I could not resist a laugh.

"Other things of the kind are written on the same principle," continued Mephistopheles. "Now I ask you which is the more honest of two rogues—the man who thus lives upon the credulity of his species, or the pickpocket?"

"There is little difference between them," I replied.

"The pickpocket is the most respectable," said my companion. "He picks your pocket, and does nothing more. The wretched rhymester, to whom I allude, deceives his vic-

tim with a lie, and robs him afterward ; and yet the worthy, in all his title-pages, has the impudence to style himself ‘esquire !’ However, he is in the right. The rogue alone can thrive where the great mass of society is composed of fools. Cheating, therefore, has become one of the liberal professions, and its professors may be called esquires.”

“ The only way in which the people can escape from such impostors,” said I, “ is by neglecting all productions recommended to them in the manner you have stated.”

“ Pooh !” he exclaimed contemptuously. “ The people love to be cheated. They could not eat, they could not drink, they could not sleep, unless they were regularly and comfortably imposed upon. That is the secret why rogues prosper. If virtue and honesty existed in the world, where would be the use of lawyers, legislators, doctors, &c. ? The more law there is, the less justice we shall find ; the more physic, the less health. Then let the poor scribblers lie their way into notoriety if they can : it is the only legitimate way to profit.

“ It would be scarcely fair, while mentioning the manufacturers of verses, to pass by such popular rhymers as the two Twaddles, for all that is characteristic of modern songs proceeds from them. One is called Namby Pamby Twaddle ; the other, Nimminy Pimminy Twaddle. Namby Pamby was first in the field, and gained a considerable share of public notice by writing some of the most heart-rending slip-slop that ever was said or sung. Nothing could exceed the sentimental softness of his effusions. They melted the most obdurate ; and were equally the admiration of high and low. The ministers, when they were obliged to resign, sung with a depth of feeling they had hitherto unknown, ‘ Who will fill our vacant places ? —the fat cook, when she basted the beef to the tune of ‘ O leave me to my sorrow,’ let fall her tears as big as mince pies into the dripping. Everybody grew lachrymose—all the world was pathetic. A pocket-handkerchief was seen in every hand, and St. Swithin reigned in every countenance. This, of course, was wonderfully to the profit of Namby Pamby Twaddle. He received very large prices for his songs. But Namby Pamby was prodigal of his gains. He loved to ride in a carriage, and give expensive entertainments to persons of distinction ; and, being rather a clever youth, he managed

to spend twice as much as he earned. One time he enclosed half a dozen of his choicest dissolvers under the attractive title of ‘ Songs for Cambrie and Cotton,’ to a publishing house in the metropolis, with a note, saying, ‘ Gentlemen, you will be so good as to send me the cash for the enclosed, as I am inexpressibly in want of it. I give a grand party to-day to some particular friends, and am in the most excruciating distress for a few pine apples.’ The letter was directed to Messrs. Screw and Skinflint. I am not certain he got the money ; but there is not a doubt that he is now at the other side of the channel, having left his numerous creditors to sing ‘ I’d be a Butterfly.’

“ Mr. Nimminy Pimminy was generally called the shadow of the other Twaddle—his productions were so like those of his namesake. If the pathos in one song sought to melt a heart of stone, the sentiment of the other was sufficient to dissolve a brick wall. This much must be said of Twaddle the Second, if he had not so much talent as Twaddle the First, he possessed a vast deal more impudence. By the assistance of this quality, and a superior knowledge of the art of puffing, he established a small reputation and a penny periodical. He managed to obtain some fame as an author, by announcing ‘ works in the press,’ of which not a line had been put to paper. He fancied, that the only way to raise his own reputation was by endeavouring to deprive men of genius of their popularity ; therefore he abused every able writer, with the hope of bringing them all down to his own level. He blustered and bullied like a Bobadil, yet the horse-whippings and the kickings he received were out of number. It is, however, but justice to say, he bore his punishments with an enviable happiness of temper. With the single exception of the Marquis de Musquito, Nimminy Primminy had the honour of being considered the greatest liar in Christendom. I cannot repeat one half of the ingenious fables he invented. One of them will perhaps satisfy you.

“ During the zenith of his notoriety, he was very actively engaged in spreading a story to the following effect :—He used to relate, that once when he was, somewhere or other, no matter where, he found a lady’s reticule, containing letters and other *et ceteras*, which proved that they belonged to the honourable Sybilla Scribe ; and that the fair owner was carrying on some naughty proceedings with a young sur-

geon. Twaddle said, that having these papers in his possession, he was enabled to make a treaty with the beautiful delinquent, exceedingly satisfactory to himself."

"I do not believe a syllable of it!" said I indignantly. "The honourable Mrs. Scribe, as a mother and a wife, is as superior as she is for beauty and genius."

"Of that I say nothing; 'tis her husband's affair, not mine," replied Mephistophiles with a sneer.

"It happened fortunately for her that the character of her defamer was well known,—all listened, but no one believed. But mendacity is not the only amiable trait in the disposition of my friend Njimminy Pimminy. When his scribblings had ceased to produce either fame or profit, (as soon they did,) being deprived of his usual means of subsistence, he for some time gained a living by an honourable and fashionable occupation;—he commenced *free-trader*, and took out letters of marque against tailors, jewellers, and wine-merchants. This cruise was for some time successful, but after that period he was comfortably lodged in one of his majesty's jails, where he has since resided. He has recently published the result of his prison experience; and once more endeavouring to excite the sympathies of the public by a deception, has sent forth the book as the production of an unfortunate clergyman suffering all the hardships of limbo. The lie, however, was soon discovered, the impostor unmasked, and the object of the work—the abolishment of imprisonment for debt,—issuing from so respectable a source, was of course regarded with proper attention. Such is the end of the two Twaddles."

"And a very appropriate end too," I replied.

"Your modern literature boasts of another great name," continued my companion. "It is that of Mr. Omnipresence Flummery. He has written on every subject, and on every subject equally well—that is, in as incomprehensible a style as it is possible to attain. Homer in the course of a long life wrote but two epics, if he wrote a line of either; but 'the modern Milton,' as he calls himself, has scribbled nearly a dozen in two or three years. He has composed one epic on the Deity, and another on the devil; then comes one for the Messiah and another for the women; Oxford, Heaven and Hell, a Universal Prayer, and a few other trifles have formed subjects for other epics. As Mr,

Omnipresence Flummery obliges his admirers by exhibiting a new portrait of his illustrious self every season, and has prefixed an engraved likeness of himself to some of his productions, it is scarcely necessary to tell you that he is the most seraphic-looking youth that ever turned up the whites of his eyes, and thought himself a Byron. The portrait he has had engraved makes him look as pathetic as a donkey in a consumption ; but the individual is as much like a linendraper's shopman, as one linendraper's shopman resembles another. His appearance is vulgar, effeminate, and conceited ; without the least expression of intellect. As to his writings, they are beneath criticism. They are obscure, ungrammatical, absurd, and in the vilest taste. I should think the recipe he uses for his productions is—an unlimited quantity of 'hard words' out of the dictionary, a certain portion of scriptural texts, and a liberal sprinkling of Miltonian phraseology. These ingredients are thrown together at random, and thus form 'an epic.' Although some critics have frequently exposed his want of originality, and his deficiency in every other poetical requisite, Master Omnipresence continues to publish, and the religiously disposed, who form a very large and a very gullible portion of the pensive public, continue to patronise."

"Has he not made some money by his productions?" I inquired.

"Very little," he replied ; "for the puffing they require to make them sell carries off the profits. You may now see most of his epics at the book-stalls, ticketed at less than a quarter of their publishing price. But if Flummery has not made money, he has made friends. One of them, a worthy bishop, was much attracted by the genuine piety and charming incomprehensibility of the verses of Master Omnipresence, and behaved very liberally to the author. One morning, as Flummery was delightfully engaged in his own apartments in the solitary enjoyment of that exceedingly moral work the 'Paroles d'un Croyant,' he was informed that the good bishop was coming up-stairs. The modern Milton, with more speed than respect, shoves the *chef d'œuvre* of the pious Abbé de la Mennais under the sofa, takes down a volume of his patron's sermons, and is immediately so intent upon their merits that he does not observe his lordship's entrance."

"Always studying!" exclaimed the bishop, regarding his *protégé* very favourably.

"Ah!" replied the youthful bard, with an angelic roll of his eyes, "if my time could always be devoted to such superior productions as the one I am now studying, with what profit should I learn?" The prelate looked at the book, and, of course, was singularly charmed when he discovered it to be the identical volume of sermons on which he had bestowed so much labour and attention; and Mr. Omnipresence Flummery was sent to Oxford to finish his education, at the expense of the generous Bishop Bombast.

"You know, as well as I do, that the students of Lincoln College are as alive to a frolic as any students in the world; and when they discovered that they were honoured with the society of so great a personage as the modern Milton, they determined to play a trick or two at his expense. He was invited to a banquet; and although he declared he never drank any liquor stronger than water, he was forced to drink wine, and that in no small quantity. Whether it was the wine or the flatteries he swallowed, the speeches he delivered, or the sentiments he heard, I know not; but towards midnight the water-drinker became so drunk that he was unable to stand; but still he spouted and shouted many things of which no trace could be found in his writings. When he became more quiet he was laid upon a shutter, and carried on the shoulders of four scouts towards his lodgings. The collegians followed at a distance to witness the result. As they expected, it happened the bearers were met and stopped by the proctor and his bulldogs.

"Whom have you got here?" loudly demanded the proctor.

Flummery, roused by the question, in that happy state in which every danger is defied, supported his body on one elbow, and commenced singing aloud a song of a very questionable character he had heard during the evening:—

"Here I am, kind gentilhomme,
Just arrived shafe from France;
Dare I meet vid von English lady,
She teach me de English dance.
Dumble down deary! Dumble down deary?
Dumble down deary, hi gee wo!"

"The academical officer was thunderstruck. He saw the immaculate Mr. Omnipresence Flummery with his eyes, instead of being 'in a fine phrensy rolling,' swimming about with that unsteady look which marks the last stage of drunkenness; his hair, which used to be so interestingly parted in the middle, was now straggling in impious disorder over his forehead; his seraphic face was swollen and dirty; and his collegiate gown in a precious pickle."

"'Mr. Flummery!' at last exclaimed the proctor, when his surprise subsiding allowed him the use of his speech, 'I'm astonished!'

"'So am I!' screamed the bard, trying to steady himself in his position. 'But I say, Old Cockalorum! how's your wife?' Then he continued:—

"She drink gin afore Madeira,
Or any other kind of wine.
Dumble down deary! Dumble—'

"'I must acquaint his lordship with this transaction,' observed the guardian of collegiate propriety.

"'He may go to the devil and shake himself! and you may go and help him, Old Cockalorum!' shouted the pious youth, as he continued the burden of his song:

"Dumble down deary, hi gee wo!"

"'You shall be punished, sir!' said the proctor, angrily. 'But as this is your first offence, I shall only sentence you to copy the two last numbers of the Spectator.'

"'All my eye and Betty Martin!' replied the modern Milton. 'You're a humbug, Old Cockalorum! You punish *me*!' exclaimed the indignant author, looking down upon the individual who had threatened him; 'I'll let you know who you're speaking to. Punish! Who are you? Take *that*, Old Cockalorum!' and Omnipresence, pot-valiant, struck out right and left at his supposed foe, which occasioned his tumbling off the shutter upon the unfortunate proctor, and nearly breaking both their necks. The collegians, at this conclusion of the dialogue, laughed aloud, and hastened to their rooms highly gratified with the success of their joke. The trick played upon Omnipresence Flummery having been discovered, his indiscretion was

passed over; and he has since eschewed strong potations, studied diligently, and become a Bachelor of Arts."

"Perhaps his sermons may be better than his poems," said I.

"Such a thing is possible," replied Mephistophiles, "for they cannot be worse. Now let me say a few words concerning my excellent friend, Dr. Toddy. Dr. Toddy is a political writer, an essayist, and a scholar; a magazine contributor of great *nothings*, a newspaper editor of small wonders; he is an abusive critic, a vulgar caricaturist, an unsafe friend, and an unprincipled enemy. Possessing some influence on the press, he has used it to attack men of genius who refused to pay him homage; and in the pursuit of so worthy an object he employs the vilest falsehoods, the grossest abuse, the principles of a ruffian, and the language of a drunkard. But this conduct results from his habits. Having lost that place in society to which his education entitled him, he has since been obliged to associate with the low and the base. If in your travels you should happen to look in at the Blue Posts or the Red Lion, you will find Dr. Toddy in the taproom, in a state of glorious intoxication, presiding over a bowl of punch, and delighting a circle of vulgar listeners with his irresistible humour and extraordinary learning. Those houses are his favourite resort; but he is quite as familiar with the interior of every ginshop from Paddington to Limehouse. He at first drinks to get drunk, then drinks to get sober. In a state of actual sobriety I do not think he was ever seen. You may, with tolerable accuracy, calculate by the style of his writings the state of the writer. When you read an article of his amazingly dull and stupid, be sure it was written by the author before the first bowl had been finished; when you begin to discover glimpses of meaning, be certain he is getting *rather fresh*; if the paper abounds with snatches of broad humour and glimpses of real talent, Dr. Toddy is greatly inebriated; and when you find nothing but incomprehensible absurdities, obscene jests, and the most vulgar abuse, there is not a doubt in the world that Dr. Toddy is as drunk as he can be. Many small scribblers have imitated his boisterous tone of criticism; and the doctor, like Dennis, might often call out, 'By G—d, that's my thunder!' but it is easy to perceive that the tempest raised by both is

equally harmless. Their thunder is never accompanied by lightning. It is all—‘sound and fury, signifying nothing.’

“It is as a political writer Dr. Toddy is next to be considered. He is one of those who, like Burke, consider party ‘the madness of many for the gain of few’: therefore leaves others the madness, and looks sharp after the gain. He scorns those feeble politicians who fix their eyes on one side of an argument, and there obstinately remain: his perceptive faculties embrace a wider field. He writes in the morning for the Whigs, in the evening for the Tories, and his afternoons he gives to the Radicals. As it is his boast to say that he is ‘open to all parties and influenced by none,’ he takes his pay from each with equal gratitude. It is the busines of his life to keep up the balance of power among the different political classes that divide the kingdom; for with their existence is bound up his own. Even his meals take the character of his opinions: he breakfasts liberally, dines destructively, and sups conservatively.”

“Humph!” I exclaimed. “Like our friend, the man of the world, he has no prejudices, no false modesty, no useless pride.”

“Just so!” replied he. “He is a great friend of Mr. Nimminy Pimminy Twaddle: in fact, they are two turtle-doves; their mutual *billing* is well known, though their ‘cooing’ is not so notorious; and these gentle evidences of their affection have made the doves partners in the same cage. I must not conclude my recollections of modern authors without mentioning Mr. Lickspittle. He differs in many respects from the individuals I have just noticed. He has not the imitative faculty of Twaddle, nor the unprejudiced genius of Toddy. His principal talent consists in making a profitable use of the scissors. He can dovetail other men’s writings so scientifically, that no one can guess whence came the materials; and the result is a literary mosaic, formed of borrowed gems and his own pebbles. The fates have united him to a clever wife—a woman of considerable natural genius, and a shrewd observer of men and things. She saw that Lickspittle was no conjurer, but that he might be made useful in clever hands. She married him; and congratulated her own judgment when she found him the editor of an influential periodical, and herself one of its most puffed contributors. The secret of his success

is, that Lickspittle became a sort of literary toad-eater. He had cringed, and fawned, and flattered to publishers; and had begged, borrowed, and stolen from authors, till he made his clever wife popular, and his stupid self a person of consequence. He is now superintendent of the 'puffing department to his employer—does all his dirty work, and his own besides—patronises men of small talent, who will assist him gratuitously in his editorial labours—and picks up what information he can by sucking the brains of those men of genius with whom he may happen to come in contact."

Soon after the conclusion of this conversation, we approached a party of country people regaling themselves with many outward manifestations of rural pleasure, round a magnificent old oak. It was one of the finest trees of the kind I had ever seen; and, though still in a most flourishing condition, it had evidently existed for some two or three centuries. It was the glory of that part of the country; and as we came nearer to the group, who were regarding its proud appearance with much enthusiasm, we heard the following verses sung by one of the party, the rest joining in the chorus:—

THE OLD OAK TREE.

'Hail! hail! hail to the old oak tree!
The delight of the brave, and the boast of the free:
For while thou art ours, merry England shall be
The pride of the world and the queen of the sea!
Spring adorneth thy limbe with bright emerald studs,
Summer bathes thy proud head with her fresh falling floods;
Thy rich flowing tresses doth autumn caress,
And winter flings o'er thee his frost-spangled dress.'

CHORUS. Hail! hail! hail to the old oak tree!

"Wave! wave! wave thy Briarean arms!
Which embrace the fond winds as they sing of thy charms.
A thousand fierce storms have assail'd thee, but lo!
The king of the woods his green glories can show!
In the shade of thy leaves I in infancy slept,
And among thy tall branches in boyhood I crept;
In thy famed 'wooden walls' I my manhood have pass'd;
And a grave at thy foot I in age seek at last.

CHORUS. Hail! hail! hail to the old oak tree!

"Sing! sing! sing of the glorious oak!
 Whose firm bulwarks have kept our free souls from the yoke;
 But voices are heard in the forest and field
 Which would stir up the dead if the living should yield!
 The rewarders of old at most eloquent praise
 Gave the hero his laurel, the poet his bays;
 But the air, the sweet air of free England I breathe,
 And but sigh for a garland her oak trees may wreath.

CHORUS. Hail! hail! hail to the old oak tree!

"That is the sort of song I like," I exclaimed, as we passed the joyous party; "for the sentiment it expresses must be universally appreciated; the language is imaginative, without being too much so to be generally understood; and there is a nationality in its character which ought to make it a favourite among the people for whom it has been written."

"Pooh!" replied Mephistophiles, sneeringly; "but 'tis worthy of its subject, which is much better fitted for tables and chairs than a string of ridiculous verses."

As we were not inclined to agree upon that argument, the remaining portion of our ride was passed in silence, and we soon afterward arrived at our destination.

CHAPTER IV.

My first speech in the House of Commons, and the effect it produces.—I quarrel with my uncle.—The means by which I obtain popularity.—Mephistophiles' opinions of gambling, and his singular history of a wealthy sheriff.

I RETURNED to town a few days previous to the coming on of a debate in the House of Commons of a very important character. It arose out of a ministerial measure, having for its object an equitable arrangement of church property. It was opposed by the Radicals for not being sufficiently liberal, and met with an opposition equally violent from the Tories for being too destructive. Lord Melcombe had been extremely anxious that I should speak and vote against the

motion ; but when I entered Parliament I determined to act according to circumstances. I had observed, by continual attendance at public meetings, political dinners, and by mingling frequently with men of all parties, that I had no chance of obtaining the distinction for which I panted, if I became a partisan of the Conservatives. There was a strong popular prejudice running against the Tory party, which I thought no talent could stem ; and any one professing their principles, I felt assured, would share in their unpopularity. Liberal sentiments were becoming so general, that anything of an opposite nature was scarcely ever heard. The coterie at Lady Julia's, among whom I frequently met the principal ministers, talked of nothing but patriotism, liberality, and the people. The countess usually contrived to speak to me on the same subject ; and her observations were produced in so winning a manner, that it was impossible to leave her without being convinced of her sincerity. It was evident that she wished me to profess similar opinions.

The night of the debate arrived. I was early in the house, and listened attentively to the speeches of the different orators. One of the secretaries of state introduced the measure in a long speech of several hours' duration, in which he explained the nature of the abuses in the church, endeavoured to prove the utility of the proposed alterations, and described the manifold advantages which would be produced by a settlement of the long-agitated question upon a basis of justice and religion. He was much cheered as he proceeded, and sat down amid very general applause. An Irish member, called O'Blarney, followed, whose hatred of the established church and democratic principles were well known. He commenced a violent tirade against the corruption of the clergy,—an oration that lasted longer than his predecessor's, and containing something of everything except argument. He concluded by moving, as an amendment, a resolution to the effect that the state should no longer encourage any particular form of worship to the exclusion of the rest, and that persons of every religious persuasion should be allowed to support their spiritual directors by voluntary contributions alone.

Sir Pensive Placid immediately afterward arose. Although before he arose some little confusion prevailed in

various parts of the house, when he commenced speaking, all listened with the most courteous attention. He realized, both in his manner and language, all that I had conceived of a perfect orator; and I wondered not at the respect with which he was listened to, when I heard the winning strain of argumentative eloquence that flowed from his lips. He spoke of the exclusive right of the church to retain possession of the wealth it had acquired, to which, he said, it was as justly entitled as any nobleman to his estates; and, although he acknowledged himself favourable to a remodeling of the establishment, if it could be done with safety to good government, and honour to the national religion, he denounced any attempt to sever the church from the state, or to apply church property to any but religious purposes. So persuasive appeared his style of reasoning, that many of his opponents applauded his arguments, and, at the conclusion, all parties seemed to join in continued cheers. Other orators followed, who exhibited the same views of the subject; many spoke, who seemed to have no views at all; and much the greater portion of the oratory consisted of idle declamation and unmeasured abuse. The first night the debate was adjourned: it was continued the next day; and the ministers were so hard pressed, that when the House adjourned at an early hour of the morning, it was generally believed that the division would oblige them to resign.

On the third day of the debate I arose, amid many cries of "Divide!" much coughing, and considerable confusion. This I expected. A stranger, if listened to in the house at all, is usually heard with impatience. As I had attracted the speaker's attention, I continued speaking. There had seldom been so great an attendance of members; and as I saw that if I wanted to distinguish myself, the opportunity had arrived, I felt extraordinary excitement. The noisiest soon became quiet, merely from curiosity to know what I could say on the subject. I took advantage of the attention which then prevailed, and, although at first I felt very nervous and irresolute, I shortly afterward poured out a torrent of stirring eloquence that quickly riveted every eye upon me. The whisper of "Who is he?" became now rather general; and exclamations of "Hear! hear!" from the principal men of all parties assured me that they thought my observations worthy of being listened to. I then entered

into a rapid but forcible sketch of the progress of religious establishments, from the age of primitive Christianity to the Reformation, following it up with a more particular history of the reformed church since its union with the government. When I exposed the abuses of pluralities and non-residence, I was loudly cheered by the Liberals ; when I showed the necessity of purifying the church from the abuses which were destroying its utility, I was equally applauded by the ministers ; and when I proved that, by making the necessary alterations, the institution would gain greater influence and more general respect, without in the least degree affecting its exclusive property or intimate alliance with the state, the enthusiastic cheers of the Conservatives were echoed by their opponents with equal vigour ; and the plaudits continued so long, that it was some minutes before I could proceed. I saw the effect I had produced. It excited me to greater efforts.

I supported my arguments with a passionate earnestness of language, and a concentrated power of purpose, that led the majority of my hearers unresistingly along with me. I expressed a deep love of religion—I advocated a universal diffusion of intelligence—I avowed sentiments that developed the purest philanthropy, and the most anxious love of truth ; and in conclusion, I called upon all who upheld the cause of morality and justice, in words that forced their way direct to their hearts, to support with heart, soul, and strength, the admirable and constitutional measure before the House ; and prove, by so doing, that they did *not* array themselves against the general good in a factious and traitorous opposition, and were *not* those untiring supporters of tyranny, ignorance, and vice, they were declared to be by their opponents. I thought the cheering which commenced as I sat down would never terminate. My speech concluded the debate, and the result was, that the amendment was negatived without a division, and that the ministers carried their measure by an immense majority.

The next morning, while I was reading the reports of my speech in the morning papers, where it took up several columns, and had been honoured by more than one leading article from the Liberal journals, my uncle was announced. I could see in a moment that he was not in the most amiable temper.

" You ungrateful boy !" he exclaimed, as he stood before me looking exceedingly dissatisfied, " you little know the mischief you have done."

" I was congratulating myself that I had done some good," said L.

" Good !" echoed the old man passionately. " Do you call disappointing the hopes of your party—accomplishing the ruin of the church—and assisting in the infamous designs of the Whigs—good ? Have I brought you into parliament for no other purpose than to destroy the Conservative cause ?"

I was going to reply, but his lordship recommenced with greater energy ; so I thought it best to allow the torrent to waste itself away.

" Sir ! you have disgraced me in the eyes of my political friends. You have been a traitor to the good cause ; and are the first of your family who ever assisted the Whigs to the prejudice of the Tories. I see how it is. Lady Brambleberry was right. Lady Julia could have no other object in view in the attentions she paid you, than to induce you to join her faction."

I was going to interrupt him rather indignantly, but he allowed me no opportunity.

" They would persuade you black is white, and as easily convince you of any thing else that suited their purpose. I hoped something better from you ; and so did the Duke of Ordnance, and Sir Pensive Placid. They designed to bring you forward. They promised me they would. Now, angry as I am, and justly so, I am willing to forget all, and assist in your advancement, if you will oppose the secend reading of the bill you have so wilfully supported."

I endeavoured to excuse myself from making such a promise.

" You *must* do it, sir !" exclaimed my uncle authoritatively. Then I gave him plainly to understand I would not attempt conduct so inconsistent and disgraceful, if I could be made prime minister to-morrow.

My uncle heard me quietly, then burst out in the most violent invectives against my ungrateful conduct, striding up and down the room with his hands behind him and his hat on, and every now and then stopping to utter some vio-

lent abuse of Whigs, Radicals, myself, and the measure I had supported.

"I tell you what, sir," he at last observed, as intelligibly as his passion would allow him, "I cannot prevent you from being my heir, and I do not wish to alter the arrangements I have made in your favour; but unless you immediately free yourself from the factious party with whom you have got entangled, you shall not see my face again, or hold communication with any of my friends or family. Sir, the principles of the great William Pitt—" A fit of coughing, brought on by his violent passion, interrupted some eulogy of his favourite statesman, which I did not regret; and when he recovered so as to be able to continue the subject, he coolly bade me "Good-morning," and indignantly left the house.

He had not left me many minutes, before the right honourable Lord Bubble and Squeak was announced. I had conversed with his lordship frequently at Lady Julia's, and knew him to be one of the most influential members of the existing administration. I could easily guess the purport of his visit. He called to thank me for the support I had given the government on the preceding night. He had also another object, which I was not slow in discovering. It was to find out whether I had any objection to take office under the present administration. Having satisfied him on that point, he took his leave, impressing me with the opinion that something worthy my attention would soon be offered, and frequently congratulating me on the brilliant display of eloquence I had made. "A speech," he said, with, as I thought, a little egotism, "superior to anything heard within the walls of that house since he had left it."

"I am on the right road at last," thought I; and I resolved not to lose the advantage I had gained. I had my speech printed and distributed in a cheap form; and so successful was its publication, that twenty editions were sold off in the first month. I took a prominent station in all political meetings, made speeches at public dinners, attended the house regularly, and spoke long and earnestly on all important subjects; and soon found myself in the possession of as large a share of public attention as ought to have sufficed any political aspirant. But I was not so satisfied. I wanted to obtain a more substantial power.

The work I had published, as it contained some novel and striking views of men and things, became very generally read. It was praised in the reviews; and as soon as the authorship became known, it was more praised than ever. This was not my only attempt at composition. With the pursuit of pleasure—that pleasure which is always procurable by the young and wealthy—I began to get weary. I was tired of being merely fashionable—of being the hero of *fêtes*, the honoured of mothers, and the admired of daughters. I was getting satiated with intrigue, and, with the exception of Lady Julia, beauty failed to exert its former powerful influence over me. In this state of mind I followed the bent of my genius, by devoting my leisure to the creation of works of imagination; and the excitement they produced during their composition, and the applause which followed their publication, for some time rewarded me for the labour I endured. But in time I grew weary of seeing my works on every table and my portrait in every exhibition, gave up the pursuit of literature, and devoted myself exclusively to Lady Julia and to politics.

To become conspicuous in the fashionable world, it was necessary that I should possess a liberal share of fashionable vices. I had thought it necessary to follow the customary means of obtaining celebrity, and, by the direction of Mephistophiles, had become a member of some of the most distinguished clubs—another name for the higher order of gambling houses. I sometimes gambled for the sake of the excitement it produced, but play was not one of my passions. I found greater gratification in observing the gamesters, than in watching the game. One evening I was with Mephistophiles in one of those princely mansions in St. James's-street, that are supported by the wealthy for the advantage of rogues, when, after directing my attention to the air of luxury and refinement which pervaded that magnificent establishment, he said, in his caustic manner—

“ Of course, all this glitter and plate-glass is only to make the place look handsome—fit for the noblemen and gentlemen who frequent it. It is not meant, by dazzling the eye, to intoxicate the senses of the wealthy stranger who is introduced into the house by some of the right honourable subscribers, and to make him sacrifice more liberally and more willingly to that fool’s idol and knave’s deity, chance.”

"Is it not surprising," said I, "that so many are found hazarding their fortunes in a speculation that is neither honourable nor safe?"

"Not at all!" replied my companion; "fools have always been a numerous race, and will ever be preyed upon by knaves. It frequently happens that the dupe turns rogue, as a tadpole is transformed into a frog; and often gains a sort of moral amphibiousness by the change; that is, he manages to associate with the class to which he belonged, and that which he has since joined, with equal facility. Besides, the passion of gambling is universal; it forms a principal ingredient in human nature. The desire of enriching one's self is the hope of all, and all speculate as a means to gain the desired end. It is the basis of all mercantile transactions—it is the aim of commerce, trade, agriculture, the useful arts, science, learning, and everything that possesses value. The merchant gambles—so does the tradesman, so does the farmer; and, more than all, so do the money-lender and the stock-broker. They stake certain things upon national faith, or private credit; upon the elements, or upon other favourable chances, expecting to reap a profit. The soldier stakes his life, for eleven pence a day, upon the chance of war—the sailor, for a similar stake, runs the same risk—the thief risks the gallows for a handkerchief—and the minister is equally hazardous for power. Fate rattles the dice, and lo! the soldier gets a pension, and the sailor a bullet—the thief becomes a landed proprietor in New South Wales, and the unpopular minister commits self-destruction to escape the persecutions of his enemies. No wonder that the card-table should always be well attended! See how busy they are around us. Observe the gentlemanly scoundrels, how cool they appear. Look at the unfortunate victims, how careless they attempt to be. Both are hypocrites. It is impossible for any man, if he once attempt gambling, to leave it off while he has a sixpence to lose. I will prove this to you by referring to a transaction that occurred here."

You have heard of Spoonbill. He was sheriff of the county of —; never mind that, but he had made a fortune of two hundred thousand pounds by contracts in sea stores during the war. He had never touched a card for the first forty years of his life—was a simple, uneducated, vain sort of a man. At that time he fancied, as other fools do, that

he should like to see the world ; and went to France. At Versailles he had the honour of being introduced into the society of some noble blacklegs, and was ultimately prevailed upon to play ‘a quiet rubber.’ By some of those singular accidents that are always intended, he at first won considerably. He afterward went to Paris, and at the sales he met the same parties ; among whom I need only mention the names of our friend Lord Sponge, Lord de Roué, Lord Westend, Sir Pigeon Diamond, and Heartly Bareface ;—the latter, a younger branch of the Barefaces the great capitalists, subscribed at Paris five hundred pounds to aid a scheme of his worthy coadjutors to break the bank at Frescati’s—a scheme which, it is almost needless to say, concluded with the loss of every farthing subscribed. Among these distinguished personages, Spoonbill very quickly lost as much as forty thousand pounds. The ex-sheriff then thought that he had lost quite sufficient, and returned to England with a solemn vow never again to look at a card. But his right honourable friends were not satisfied. He was still worth the plucking ; and while he was staying a short time in London, they had him elected a member of this club. Spoonbill was in ecstasies. The honour of being allowed to associate on the most intimate terms with lords and baronets almost turned his brain. What were forty thousand pounds in comparison with such excellent friends ? Mere dross, he thought.

“ Day after day, and night after night, found him here surrounded by the same party, playing for immense sums. He was almost invariably a loser : still he played, and still he lost. His right honourable friends kindly assured him that his luck would turn ; and his own hopes were sanguine that some fortunate chance would occur, and replace him in his former position. He doubled the stakes. All this time his property was rapidly being swallowed up in the vortex that had been prepared for it. It continued to sink with increased velocity. Soon the infatuated fool had nothing left but his valuable estates in —shire ; but he was so well satisfied with losing his fortune to noblemen, that he staked these. He lost.

“ When he gave into the hands of his excellent friends the title deeds of his property, he begged earnestly that they would allow him a small annuity to subsist upon, as they

possessed all his wealth, and he was now a beggar. Lord de Roué pulled up his cravat before a magnificent mirror, exclaiming with peculiar emphasis, ‘ My dear fellow, *are you mad?* ’ and turned on his heel. Sponge consoled the victim by saying, ‘ It was much better to remain a beggar, because then one had nothing to lose.’ Westend expressed himself, ‘ Cursed sorry, but he always acted up to the announcement of the play-bills—*no money returned.* ’ The others stared and walked away. Spoonbill is now living in some cheap place in Italy, upon a small allowance his wife has given him out of her income ; which sum he receives in periodical payments, and loses at the gaming-table almost as soon as it comes into his possession. He is always gaming. He would play for farthings, rather than play for nothing.”

CHAPTER V.

I accept office under the Whigs, and unexpectedly am made a representative of one of the Metropolitan Boroughs.—The peculiar nature of Lady Julia’s attachment towards me ; its sudden change, and fatal termination.

I BEGAN to imagine that the ministers had forgotten my services, and that Lord Bubble’s allusion to office was merely illusory. A month had passed, and I had received nothing but flatteries from the members of the government. In the mean time, I had, by a sort of tacit consent, become the leader of a political party, which, if not numerous, were not deficient in talent or perseverance ; consequently, my importance in the house as well as out became greatly increased. The Tories tried to woo me back to their ranks ; the Radicals endeavoured to persuade me to strengthen their party ; and the Whigs did all they could to retain me as their supporter. But I was too ambitious to be satisfied with cajolery. My party was formed of the more liberal Whigs and the more moderate Radicals ; and I was on the point of organizing an opposition for the purpose of unseating the government, when, in consequence of some difference of opinion, three or four of the ministers resigned.

I kept at home quietly, and had the gratification of reading in the papers an announcement of my having accepted the very office I wished to possess. I had, however, heard nothing upon the subject. Soon afterward I received a confidential note from Lord Bubble, requesting to see me immediately. As I entered a private room in his lordship's official residence, he appeared to me much handsomer than most people thought him. The result of our interview was, that he offered me a situation inferior in importance to the one I expected. This, to his lordship's great surprise, I refused.

I soon discovered that Lord Bubble had bestowed the office on a relative of his own, upon whose support he could always rely; but the appointment had not been gazetted. I made him understand, by the interposition of my sporting friend the Duke of Cottesmore, I had expected that office, and that I could not join his administration in a less important capacity. The statesman was anxious for my support—yet more desirous of serving his family. He held out three days. At the end of that time I kissed his majesty's hand, upon being appointed one of his principal secretaries of state.

I had now attained the proud station of a cabinet minister, but was no longer a member of Parliament; for, by accepting office, I had forfeited my seat. I was not secure of my re-election for the borough of Melcombe. The Radicals, I knew, would not support a member of the government—the Whigs were likely to oppose one who had lately opposed them—and the Tories in my uncle's interest were not likely to assist me. I was considering the dilemma in which I was placed, when the servant announced the arrival of a deputation from the electors of the borough of Brocoli. I sent word that I would wait upon them immediately.

"These gentlemen," said Mephistopheles, "you must treat with great respect. They have sufficient influence in the borouh to which they belong, which is one of the most important in the metropolis, to secure your return. This they are about to offer, on condition of your pledging yourself to bring forward such measures as they desire. The deputation is headed by Buckram the tailor, a man of considerable talent in breeches-making and electioneering—has

written some of the best articles in the Radical Review, and manufactured some of the best articles in the trade. But he has now a soul above buttons ; and although he still advocates 'measures, not men,' his measures never meddle with kerseymere, and his men have nothing to do with the shopboard. At five-and-twenty he was a working journeyman, and could neither read nor write ; at five-and-fifty he affects an aristocratic refinement in his domestic comforts, is an able republican pamphleteer, and returns two members to Parliament. You must be civil to him."

I found Mr. Buckram and his associates very civil people. The former was a shrewd, intelligent sort of man, with hard features, beetle eyebrows, and grisly whiskers ; not so vulgar as I expected, yet I had seen more gentlemanly looking tailors. His v's and w's were tolerably correct, and his aspirates generally in the right place. His associates were bustling tradesmen, anxious for a name in the newspapers — small agitators and inferior parish officers ; men of little property, and less education, but great vestry orators, and violent political partisans ; people, whose favour all public men of the popular interest are anxious to possess. I behaved to them with distinguished courtesy, paid them every possible respect, and listened to their observations with the profoundest attention ; and although they affected to hold in no estimation the graces of social life, I could easily perceive that my manner towards them had made a favourable impression. The result, as I desired, was, that when they returned to their friends, they were most eloquent in praise of my affability, my liberal sentiments, and my superior understanding.

Buckram opened the business upon which he came by inquiring whether, if I was returned for the borough of Brocoli, I would bring forward or support motions for an extension of the suffrage, for triennial parliaments, and for the vote by ballot. My reply, although it did not pledge me to advocate these measures under all circumstances, appeared sufficiently satisfactory, for I launched out into all those generalities that are everything in delivery, but nothing in analysis. The liberality of my opinions was known. The Radicals wanted to put me forward as their candidate, knowing that my popularity would ensure my return, and that the honour of the triumph would be theirs. They de-

parted in the best humour, and before the week was over, I was elected without opposition.

Although Lady Julia had for some time treated me with a certain fondness, her love had hitherto been more of an enthusiasm than a passion. With her it appeared a philosophy—an idea—a dream. She was always in raptures with my writings—praised my speeches with an eloquent warmth—listened to me with devotion, and spoke to me with tenderness. Yet her attachment was merely what is called Platonic. I have sat for hours by her side, alone, pouring out the full tide of my passionate feelings, in language I thought no woman could resist; or basking in the light of her glorious beauty, as I listened to the charm of her melodious voice breathing forth the sweetest truths of poetry and love;—but my hopes were only fed with smiles that strengthened their growth, and words that seemed a promise of their bliss. I grew more enamoured, while she continued the same impassioned yet unchanged being. The life I had led, and the unsatisfied craving of my nature for forbidden pleasures, would not allow me to live contented with such a state of existence. That she really felt for me an exalted idolatry was sufficiently evident. Her language and her looks were expressive of devotion and earnestness. She affected, too, as much mystery as if there had been anything to conceal. The time, however, came which changed the character of our intimacy.

One morning, when I had been shown into the countess's boudoir, to wait till she came from her dressing-room, I opened an album, lying, with other eleganies, upon a table. As I idly turned over the leaves, a paper fell out, upon which were written the following lines in her own handwriting. I read them.

“The shadow deepens on the hill;
Heav'n's Argus eyes wink o'er the waves;
The earth and sea are sleeping, still
As dead men in their graves.

But in my heart are clouds more deep—
A flood as wild goes dashing on;
For passion hath no rest in sleep
Till love and life are gone.

Why come these strange unquiet dreams,
 That mar my soul's disturbed rest ?
 Whence came these warm alluring gleams
 Of hopes and aims unblest ?

I strive with all the strength of life
 To stifle this too fond desire ;
 Alas ! I do but aid the strife,
 And only fan the fire !

As the chill sea-boy on the mast
 Still gazes on the polar star,
 My steadfast thoughts are ever cast
 To where my wishes are.

When reason chides, and prudence frowns,
 The tempter Love around me flies,
 And o'er my head throws rosy crowns
 That quickly blind mine eyes.

Oh ! why hath fate's unopen'd scroll
 Made thee to play so bold a part ?
 And made my strong unconquer'd soul
 Possess a woman's heart ?"

This little poem convinced me that there was something more in her love than the spiritual attachment she had professed. Delighted with the knowledge of her secret, which I immediately purposed turning to my advantage, I hastily wrote, on the same paper, the following verses :—

" The cloud that shrouds thee doth precede
 The joy of morning's golden light ;
 The storm that stirreth thee doth lead
 Thy soul to worlds more bright.

Thy slumbers calmer—sweeter, make,
 Beneath those rays that o'er thee shine ;
 And from thine eyelids heaven shall break,
 And make thy dreams divine.

Give o'er the struggle—'tis in vain !
 The hope must live—the fire must burn ;
 Be free from custom's iron chain,
 And selfish feelings spurn.

The woman's heart which thou dost own
 Needs not thy gentle praises shun ;
 'Tis like some rare, unrivall'd stone,
 Unseen by all—but one.

Then give the precious gem to him
 Who first beheld and prized its worth ;
 Which wanting, he finds heav'n is dim,
 And knows no joy on earth.

I've looked around me far and near,
 Some proud and treasured boon to win ;
 I met those fountains dark and clear,
 And saw the worth within.

Like those who search rich streams for gain,
 I o'er those wells of light would pore ;
 And grieved that, while I sought the grain,
 Another own'd the ore.

But now let me no more with stealth
 Enrich myself by such mean thrift ;
 An argosy of golden wealth
 Is left within thy gift.

Reverse that tale of poesy,
 When mighty Jove the nymph possessed ;
 Rain thou the Danian shower on me,
 And make the mortal bless'd.

There doth exist an icy bond,—
 But human hearts are stubborn things ;
 The narrow range they soar beyond
 Upon their eagle wings.

Unfurl those pinions to the blaze
 That passions glowing sunbeams give ;
 And scorn at once the idle ways
 In which weak fools may live.

And when those plumes are once unfurl'd
 In all the glorious guise of love,
 Thou'l be the wonder of the world
 Thou wert so far above.

As angel natures, by love's charms,
 From starry worlds were lured to this,
 Shalt thou within these human arms
 Enjoy a spirit's bliss !”

I had scarcely concluded the last stanza when I heard a sound near me, and, turning round on my chair, I found Lady Julia looking over my shoulder. Never did she appear so beautiful as at that moment. Her dark eyes had gained a more expressive lustre ; and her rich complexion was heightened with a warmer glow. How long she had remained in that position, and how much she had read of what I had written, I knew not ; but the powerful effect those lines had produced on her romantic nature, was evident in the strong trembling of her limbs, and the melting softness of her looks. Her gaze sunk beneath mine. She fell an unresisting victim into my eager embrace, and the hour passed by in the intoxicating delirium of an illicit passion.

No woman had possessed the power over me, or held it so long, as Lady Julia. But her influence dwelt as much in the charm of her genius as in the attractions of her person. She never tired. There was always a freshness in her thoughts that made me seek her conversation as an oasis in the midst of the steril world around us. Her admiration, too, seemed so ennobling ! Ambitious as I was, and determined as I might be at all hazards to possess the most commanding height of political power and popular greatness, I often found in her society, and in her love, an exaltation my ambition had not procured. She seemed equally raised above herself by her passion for me. She often acknowledged that she felt as if elevated into a higher and purer region of life, while listening to those overwhelming torrents of passionate eloquence with which I expressed to her my adoration.

Careful as we were of keeping our attachment a secret, it became generally talked of. Lord Alderney was always at one of his experimental farms when in the country, and spent the greater part of his time at his club, or in Parliament, when in town. He liked to see his wife admired and surrounded by talented and distinguished people ; but cared more for his improved breed of sheep than for the dangers by which she was surrounded. He prided himself upon not being jealous ; or, rather, the dread of being thought jealous made him careless. For him she had no sympathy. Her marriage had been one in which her ambition rather than her inclination had been consulted. His tastes were

so opposite to hers, and his way of life so little suited to her own, that shortly after their union she was left almost entirely to herself, and he became devoted to those pursuits which had since separated him from her so completely. Gratified with this state of independence, she gave up her leisure to the study of philosophy and poetry; attracted round her persons the most distinguished for rank and talent, advocated principles the most liberal and enlightened, and was as much admired in the high circles among which she moved for her extraordinary beauty, as she was honoured in all classes for her superior genius. A woman so worthy of admiration, and left so unguarded among all the allurements of a licentious crowd, was quickly sought after by those who, in evincing their appreciation of neglected worth, show their desire for its destruction. They were all repelled. The silly sot, the handsome rake, the talented sensualist, and the fashionable profligate, were taught that virtue could exist even in the midst of temptation. They sneered at morality, and desisted from their useless labours.

Her ladyship had, during my intimacy with her, appeared in public with her cousin, but the pleasant and amiable Lady Mary Dimpleton had consented to become the wife of Captain Fitz-Grey, on condition that the latter should speak good English, and forswear puppyism; and this arrangement having been agreed to, the happy pair had gone to pass their honeymoon in the Isle of Wight. Lady Julia's constant appearance in society without her fair relative, accompanied only by myself, occasioned much scandal among the malignant, the envious, the idle, and the depraved. Rumours were circulated, tales whispered, and paragraphs published, pointing out the nature of our intimacy. About this time I was rather surprised by a visit from Lord Alderney; for although he professed a very friendly feeling towards me, we seldom met except at the club. He sat down, and commenced enlightening me as to the state of the crops, and the difference between long and short-horned cattle. Then he pulled from his pocket several letters, and threw them on the table before me.

"There!" said he, endeavouring to throw an air of mystery into his inexpressive features, "I wish you would give me your opinion on the subject of those notes. I am not a

suspicious old fool, like our friend Lord Cornuty, who is ever tagging at his wife's tail like a calf after its dam. I have something more important to think about than jealousy. I have the fullest confidence in Lady Julia, so I don't mean to say anything to her on the subject. I come to you to advise me what is best to be done. Whom do you suppose the writer alludes to, and do you think the subject worthy of consideration?"

I thought it embarrassing enough that I should be appealed to on such a subject. It was a novel situation for the lover of the wife to be made the confidant of the husband in his doubts of her fidelity; but I had been schooled in a system of dissimulation, and perused the letters as unconcernedly as if I knew nothing of the affair. The first was to the following effect:—

"If Lord Alderney is not inclined to wink at his own dis-honour, he will immediately inquire into and put a stop to the shameful intrigue carried on by Lady Julia with a cer-tain popular member of the present administration."

The others were very similar in their tendency, evidently alluding to me, but never mentioning my name. I thought, as I read the last note, that the handwriting was a familiar one.

"Wait, my dear lord, one moment," said I, with an im-pressive appearance of sincerity, "and I will explain the affair to your entire satisfaction."

I compared these anonymous letters with some notes I had received from the marchioness, and found, as I had sus-ppected, the handwriting of both exactly similar. The same watermark was also on the paper. I pointed out these proofs of identity to his lordship. I was aware that if there was one woman he particularly disliked, it was Lady Bram-bleberry; he hated her politics as much as he detested her character.

"Ah! I see—sheer envy!" he exclaimed, throwing the letters behind the fire. "That woman would do any thing for revenge. By-the-by, this affair is strictly confidential —musn't say a word, or I shall be laughed at. Wouldn't be thought such a suspicious old fool as Cornuty for the world."

I promised the strictest secrecy, and he soon afterward took his leave. I thought it necessary to put Lady Julia on her guard against the machinations of her rival, and recommended the adoption of a greater degree of caution than we had hitherto thought it necessary to practise.

"I am the victim of a strange necessity," said she, with a sadness I had but recently perceived. "When I first saw you I felt a sentiment in your favour which originated I know not how. It sprang up as new plants arise, and none can tell whence came the seed. The more frequently I enjoyed your society the more cause there appeared for my esteem. When I heard from your lips the language of passion, I had not the moral courage which should have checked its ardour: your brilliant talents, your noble sentiments, and your generous nature placed you so far above all other men in my eyes, that I felt exalted from having inspired you with the devoted attachment you professed, and thought that I had at last found a spirit with whom mine could hold fellowship. Sympathies I could not control united me closer to you each day; yet I had no intention of allowing our intimacy to trespass upon the moral obligations that bound me to another. 'Tis true I felt myself neglected where I ought to have been cherished, and unappreciated where I should have been prized. 'Tis true I found it impossible to love one for whom I had never entertained any warmer feeling than indifference, and who possessed no endearing virtues to win my regard. He was insensible of affection as he was of my worth. From the husband I could not help frequently turning to the lover. The difference was fearful: but I thought my nature was strong enough to enjoy the poetry of the passion without tasting the poison with which it was accompanied. I drank deep draughts of that delicious essence, and struggled with its influence, like one who discovers that an opiate has been administered to him with some sinister design; I kept endeavouring to neutralize the lulling effect of your insidious addresses by some moral antidote; I attempted to shake off the slumber that was stealing over my sense of right; I roused myself from the stupefaction into which my better thoughts were sinking; I woke up as my eyes were closing, and started as my limbs were reclining in a deceitful repose: but the sleep wound round me like a serpent, and

brushed the exalting hope that had supported me in the struggle."

"Why this despondency?" said I, endeavouring with my caresses to remove the deep melancholy in which she was indulging. "You should be happy. You are unjust to yourself in giving utterance to these self-reproaches. We have neither of us any occasion to regret the past, while the present showers the contents of its cornucopia of pleasures for our gratification. Throw off this unreasonable sadness. Believe me, human felicity is so uncertain, that they are much to blame who allow it to escape them when offered for their enjoyment. Have I grown less fond?"

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed, with enthusiasm; "you are still the kind, the noble being I have ever known you. But I am changed."

I looked incredulous.

"'Tis true!" she continued, relapsing into her former melancholy. "The fear of shame, and the dread of disgrace, make me feel humiliated. I possess no more those high aspirations that made me fancy myself worthy of your love; and I enjoy no longer that self-respect that placed me above the world. I deceived myself with a false opinion of my own strength. But it is my own fault, and mine be the punishment. Deeply as I regret the false step I have made, and the ignis fatuus that led me forward, here I cannot go back. I am hurried on with an irresistible impulse, sinking deeper and deeper into the treacherous soil that gapes where I tread. I feel that I *must* love you. My existence and your love are now mingled together in one stream, and they must sink into the same ocean."

I began to feel uneasy at these desponding thoughts. Lady Julia seemed to have completely lost those fine energies that had made her the life-spring of her circle. Her glorious enthusiasm seemed utterly destroyed. I tried all my powers of persuasion, and used every inducement I could think of in endeavouring to lead her into a more healthy tone of thought. I passed whatever time I could spare from my official duties in her society. I became more devoted in my attentions. It was all in vain. She sank into a morbid melancholy, and her fine intellect seemed destined to become the prey of a diseased imagination.

One evening, just before my usual time of attending the

House, as I was examining a pair of duelling pistols that had been borrowed by a friend, the footman entered, and, exhibiting as much surprise as myself, announced Lady Alderney. I hastily concealed the weapons under a handkerchief. She approached me, but in how strange a manner! She had neither bonnet on nor shawl, and had evidently walked through the streets in a tempestuous night in the dress in which she appeared before me. She seemed wet to the skin. Her glossy hair had escaped from the silken bands that used to keep it in such classical elegance, and strayed in disorder over her pale forehead. Her eyes were wild in their expression,—her cheek hectic and sunken.

“ Vincent!” said she, in a deep whisper, “ I have left him! He was kind to me, and I couldn’t bear it. He came to town to-day, and requested to see me. He was very kind. I could not look upon him. I could not listen to him. I felt I was not *his*. I could not endure the degradation of hearing *him* talk of love. He spoke of many things, dear Vincent, and said that he intended to enjoy more of my society than he had lately done. I could not exist, Vincent, an hour with him. So I went quietly, very quietly, out of the room, without saying a word, and down the private staircase, and opened the street door; and when I got into the street, I hurried along till I came here. But now I am here, we will be *so happy*! Wont we, Vincent?”

She threw herself upon my breast, and sobbed like a child. Profligate as I was, I could not look on unmoved at the fearful wreck I had occasioned. I spoke encouragingly, fondly to her. I attempted to lessen that dreadful excitement under which she was labouring, that made her unconscious of everything but her passion for me. She would not be comforted; she would not be reasoned with.

“ Let me sit by your fireside!” she continued in a strain of melancholy misery that smote me to the heart. “ Let your household gods be mine. Unworthy as I may be to claim their protection, I will do them no dishonour. I will cling to you, Vincent, in life and in death. I will be faithfully, irrevocably yours. I will laugh when you laugh, and smile only when you smile. Look not upon me so deplorably, Vincent! Indeed I am *not* mad. I exist in the full consciousness of being the most miserable, the most de-

graded, of living things. I would shed tears, but I possess none. My heart is an arid desert ; its springs are all dried —choked up ; and in their places are caves of brine that corrode into the flesh. Pity me, Vincent, if you cannot love me ! Indeed I am become most pitiable."

She wrung her hands, and her head drooped ; and she sighed as if in unutterable anguish.

" Julia ! dearest Julia !" said I, " be calm—be composed —be more like yourself."

" 'Tis all over !" she exclaimed, sorrowfully. " All that was high and ennobling in my nature, all my love of the good and the beautiful, my proud aspirations, my great desires, have deserted me. The giddy platform on which I had raised myself has given way, and I am sinking, sinking, sinking down, without a hope to sustain me, or a redeeming virtue to break my fall. The rich colouring, imagination threw around my delusive wishes fades, and I see them in shapes all blackness and deformity. Oh ! I am so wretched ! So utterly, so completely miserable ! Let me die, Vincent ! I am unworthy to live !"

Here her sobs became more violent, and her feelings uncontrollable.

I placed her in a chair, and was going to ring for the housekeeper, to whose charge I wished to consign her, when my attention was attracted by a violent altercation on the stairs. Directly Lady Julia heard the sounds, she started up in alarm, screaming, " Save me, Vincent ! save me !" rushed towards the spot where I stood, and fell at my feet. I tried to raise her, but she clung to my knees with all the energy of despair.

" They are coming to tear me away !" she exclaimed hysterically, while her hold became more convulsed, and her look assumed the agony of terror. " Do not let them enter. Allow me to remain here, and I will be your slave—your worshipper !—all you have hoped—all you can desire. I dare not go back. I cannot play the hypocrite with a smooth cheek and a lying tongue. Here I *must* stay, for I am yours, and yours only. Ah !—"

She uttered a piercing shriek, and clung closer to my limbs ; for at that instant Lord Alderney burst into the room, armed with pistols, and followed by several of his

servants. Scarcely knowing what I was about, I snatched up one of the weapons that lay on the table.

"No, no!" shouted Lady Julia vehemently, as she sprung up between us; "let me be the sacrifice. I alone am guilty. I alone deserve punishment."

She had scarcely uttered the words when the pistol I held exploded, and the ball entered her side. Bewildered with surprise and affright, I caught her in my arms as she was falling; for Lord Alderney and his associates appeared so overpowered with horror as to be unable to render the least assistance. I laid her gently on the sofa, hoping that the wound was not mortal. The quick glazing of her eye soon convinced me that she was dying.

"Vincent," said she, in a murmur that was scarcely audible, "here! here!—" I hastily approached nearer to her, as she seemed to desire, to catch the indistinct syllables that were uttered as she gasped for breath. She made one powerful struggle, drew my head towards her own, and I felt the pressure of her lips on mine. In the next moment her arms relaxed their hold, and her head fell back. She was dead.

Lord Alderney departed with his attendants, muttering something about law, which I was not in a state of mind to comprehend, and I was left alone with the corpse of the lovely and enthusiastic being I had loved and destroyed. My feelings had become unendurable. I gazed upon the ruin I had occasioned, and my conscience-stricken spirit became the prey of a thousand agonies. I had become the murderer of the noblest, the kindest being that nature had created, and genius made perfect. The last of my human attachments I had ruthlessly severed. Where was I to love? What was left to worship? The mind that I had honoured, where was it? The devotion which had honoured me, whither had it fled? The shrine at which so many had thronged to pay a willing and exalting homage, I had, with selfish purposes, stolen from the world; and, not content with the most impious sacrilege, not satisfied with the basest pollution, I had, from a reckless and wanton impulse, levelled the fair fabric to the dust! How many more were to become my victims? Did there exist any other human creature superior to the rest in beauty and excellence whose moral worth I was doomed to crush, and whose generous

existence would be involved in the same ruin ? No ! there was nothing left me to love ; and the taunting consolation came with that assurance, that I could shed no more of the earth's most precious blood.

I would have given worlds to call back the admirable intelligence that had illumined those fond eyes, now fixed in the dull unmeaning gaze of death. I felt as if I could have died a thousand deaths to replace the spirit that had once animated the stiffening form before me. But I knew the uselessness of my regrets, and the hopelessness of my desires. Remorse goaded me with the knowledge that I had been her deliberate destroyer, and that now all my love was as unavailing as it had before been criminal. Turning my eyes away from a sight that I could no longer endure, I thought that in the shadow of the room I beheld the features of Mephistophiles glaring on me with a most malignant joy. I sprang forward with a supernatural hatred. The thought that he had designed this inhuman murder rose in my mind, and roused me from the torture I endured with an uncontrollable feeling of deadly revenge. But my imagination must have deluded me. There was nothing visible.

CHAPTER VI.

I become Prime Minister, and form a popular government.—Mephistophiles, to my great delight, takes his departure, after having favoured me with some important advice.—I succeed in saving the life of a stranger, who is discovered to be an old friend.—The continuation of the remarkable history of the Fatalist.

WHEN I first accepted office, the devotion I paid to its duties was almost unremitting ; and I soon discovered that if I wished to distinguish myself as a legislator, I must exclude from my attention all less important pursuits. There was always some bill to be brought forward—some measure to be supported—my coadjutors to be defended, or the opposition to be silenced. Then Mr. Buckram was continually urging me to produce before the legislature his favourite theories, and some of his active associates were besieg-

ing me for clerkships for their sons, or official appointments for their nephews. My uncle I had not seen for a long time ; but I had been informed, that as soon as he knew that I had become a member of the Whig administration, he had left the country in disgust. Of Dora I had heard nothing ; nor was I likely to hear anything of her, as I held no sort of communication with the Brambleberry family, and I mingled so little in fashionable life that I knew nothing of its chronicles.

The party of Sir Pensive Placid were unceasing in their hostility to the government, but their leader did not show so bitter an animosity as his friends. He always appeared mild, dignified, and reasonable ; exhibited comprehensive talents, a quick discernment, and impressive sincerity. Although he could only be backed by a minority, he never rose without exciting universal attention ; and I found more difficulty in replying to him, than in opposing all the other Tories in the House. In short, it became a chief part of my labours to answer his attacks ; and as they were invariably persuasive, forcible, and well directed, I found constant use for all the tact, sophistry, and eloquence I possessed. The policy of my coadjutors was, to endeavour to gain the support of each of the two parties by which they were opposed, in opposition to the other ; knowing, that if they united, they would be too strong for the government ; but when one strengthened the ranks of the ministry, the other must be left in a considerable minority. Consequently, at one time a measure was brought forward to please the radicals, which was followed by one of a more conservative character to satisfy the Tories. This had its effect for some time ; but still the Tories were anxious to return to power, and left no plan untried to gain their object. I found by reference to my Magic Mirror, that the most influential of the body assembled together at a sort of club, at which they devised the best means of effectually opposing the government. Knowing their tactics as soon as themselves, I immediately took care to render them futile ; and nothing could exceed their annoyance, when they found me prepared for their surprises and defeating their manœuvres. They fancied that treachery existed in their own camp, and every one distrusted his neighbour.

I had managed, by great exertion, to make the ministry

to which I belonged, a strong, and in some respects, a popular one. It is not to be denied that considerable dissatisfaction existed; for one party were clamorous that they should proceed faster, and another exerted itself with equal vigour to pull them back. Many of my colleagues, however, I discovered, wanted energy of character as well as commanding talent. The Premier was growing old and indolent, was getting weary of the unceasing hostility he met with from the Marquis of Brambleberry's more active associates—and kept imagining that he was hurrying on the government too rapidly. The right honourable Lord Bubble and Squeak was continually obliged to hasten to the rescue, and his bitter sarcasms, and caustic declamations, more than once saved my venerable chief from the attacks of his political enemies.

One of the principal secretaries of state, Viscount Lavender, in consequence of his effeminacy, had drawn upon himself the secret enmity of Lord Bubble, and I had considerable difficulty in keeping as much as possible in the background a dislike which soon became mutual. Lord Gulliver, the little representative of the great and wealthy Brickbat family, was ambitious of obtaining greater influence in the government than he possessed. In fact, I found as much jealousy and ill-will among my colleagues as might be discovered among a whole troop of school-girls.

The unhappy death of Lady Julia occurring at this period, for a length of time unfitted me for taking any active share in public life. I seemed to have lost all ambition. The blow came with stunning effect, and the faculties in which I had taken so great a pride, appeared to have been felled to the ground. I made it generally believed that I was attacked with a dangerous malady, and while the popular party were incessantly expressing their anxiety for my recovery, and their opponents taking advantage of my absence from parliament, I had abandoned myself to all the accumulating tortures of remorse. I felt the conviction that I was doomed to imbrue my hands in the blood of those who were most devoted to me—the young—the beautiful—the true;—and I shrank from social communication with the world, fearful that another victim might be added to the list. I sank into a stupor. I lost all inducement to exertion. The doctrines of the Fatalist were ever exercising their injurious tendency.

From this lethargy I was roused by the intelligence that the government had been defeated in an important measure, and that the ministers had tendered their resignations. The effect of this information upon me was electrical. I seemed without a struggle to cast off as a slough the overpowering load of suffering that had weighed down my spirit to the earth ; and I became a new man. Love all at once appeared to me the idle dream of poetic minds. I sank the past in oblivion, and commenced a new present, with pride and ambition alluring me forward to a glorious future. I had scarcely recovered from my astonishment, when I received a letter from the King, requiring my immediate attendance at the palace. I hastened to the appointment, was most graciously received by the monarch, and intrusted with the formation of a new ministry.

When the Tories by their junction with the Radicals had defeated the Whigs, they seemed certain that the result of their triumph would be their return to office ; but the Radicals, when they ascertained that there existed the least probability of such a result, joined the party they had lately opposed, and commenced the most violent hostilities against those with whom they had recently been united. The liberals found the most important supporter of their cause in the public press ; and such a tumult was immediately raised in the minds of the people, that the Conservatives became alarmed, and deferred accepting power till a more favourable opportunity. The consequences were, my appointment as prime minister ; my formation of a more liberal cabinet than had preceded it ; and our party entering upon the duties of office with a degree of popularity far exceeding that possessed by any government that had ever existed. I became quite the idol of popular worship. The first day I went to dine with the Lord Mayor as the head of the existing government, the horses were taken from my carriage, and I was dragged through the city by the delighted people. Upon every other occasion I was honoured with similar marks of respect. All I said and did became immediately the theme of a million admiring tongues. The newspapers flattered. Addresses to his Majesty were forwarded from every part of the kingdom, thanking the King for calling to his councils so able a minister ; and deputations waited upon me from the most important cities and towns, expressing the most unbounded

confidence in my administration. In many populous districts the labouring classes subscribed a penny each for the purpose of presenting me with a testimony of their gratitude for the services I had rendered the popular cause; and the result came into my possession in the shape of various silver cups, ornamented with flattering inscriptions. My portrait was seen in every print-shop; my bust was hawked about in every street. I was again elected for the borough of Brocoli without a contest, and again Mr. Buckram and his busy associates declared themselves completely satisfied with my political sentiments. All men turned their thoughts towards me, and each congratulated the other on the favourable prospect of the country. In fact, I became *the most popular minister that had ever existed.*

I cannot say I was not gratified with the incense so liberally showered upon me. The reverse was nearer the truth. I delighted in being the object of an almost universal idolatry. It was a sustenance to my pride. It hurried me forward in that course of proceeding in which I thought a greater and more durable fame might be found; and, reckless of consequences, I resolved to pause at nothing likely to strengthen me in my present position, or raise me the smallest height above it. It was a glorious realization of my ambitious hopes to find myself in possession of the highest office in the state.

I had for a long period seen Mephistopheles seldom and at distant intervals. When I asked him the reason of his absence, he merely said that he had been visiting various parts of the country, with the design, should he return to Germany, of publishing there his notions of men and manners in England. I did not regret his absence. To say the truth, I should have been glad to rid myself of his company, for he never spoke without a sneer, and appeared to regard every thing around him with the same humiliating scorn. His presence was disagreeable for many reasons. It seemed to remind me that my greatness was more the result of supernatural agency than my own ability. Besides which, I had lately entertained some doubts that the assistance I had thus acquired, promised by him in our fearful compact at the Witches' Jubilee, would be followed by circumstances not in any way desirable. A conviction that the result would be a fatal and terrible one to me, would, in spite of my uncon-

querable resolution to dare the worst, sometimes intrude upon my mind when he was present. I was therefore most anxious to be free of his companionship.

" My honoured master ! " said Mephistopheles, upon an occasion when, after a protracted absence, he favoured me with his society ; " I perceive, with great regret, that my presence is no longer welcome. I do not accuse you of ingratitude ; such an accusation would be useless, if not unjust. You have mounted the required elevation ; and as you have no intention of coming down, of course the ladder is considered unnecessary. ' Whatever is, is right.' You have attained the summit of your ambition. You are the most powerful subject in the realm. And as I can be no longer of any service, I perceive, that the more scarce I make myself the more precious shall I be in your eyes. Humph ! Such faithful servitude as mine deserves a better reward. But, remember, I do not complain. I am obliged to take the world as I find it, and this sort of treatment is not at all uncommon. Man is only consistent in one thing — baseness. Of course then you cannot be blamed for wishing me out of the way. Like our friend the Man of the World, I am above vulgar prejudices, and your conduct does not lower the opinion I had of mankind, because that opinion has long been fixed in the mud—it cannot sink lower ; nor does it lessen my judgment of yourself, because the latter has been of so peculiar a size as to resist all farther compression. These observations are merely introductory to a piece of intelligence which, doubtless you will hail with exceeding gratification. I am going to leave you ; you hope, I am well aware, *for good* ; but I take my departure as husbands take their wives, *for better or worse*. You will discover, as quickly as the husband does, the nature of the change. Before I retire from your service I think it necessary to give you a little advice. You may follow it or not, as you please.

" Beware of parties. No matter what object they have in view, their true object is their own aggrandizement. Always appear a patriot. It is a trade easily learned, requires no capital, and is now universally fashionable. No matter what your private disposition may be, let your public character be liberal. When prize-fighters, swindlers, incendiaries, cheating lawyers, and notorious quacks, be-

come the representatives of the people, by merely advocating a more liberal system of government than any ministry would choose to follow, it is obvious to the most bigoted, that honesty, geniss, truth, and virtue are superfluities which every political man can dispense with. Place no confidence in princes. They suck in dissimulation with the royal pap. They are taught the advantages of tyranny by an imperial catechism. And above all, put no trust in the people. They will lick the dust off your feet one day, and raise your trunkless head upon a bloody pike the next. Think all men enemies till they prove themselves your friends. Use all men with friendliness till they declare themselves your enemies. Never put yourself in the power of a woman; and whenever you wish to follow an object to your own advantage, keep the project to yourself. This is my advice. In conclusion, I beg to say, that I shall always be ready to obey your summons; none more readily will fly at your bidding; but it is but fair that I should inform you, that when you require my services, there is a trifling obligation you will be expected to fulfil." I shuddered. "It is but right," he continued, in a cold sardonic tone that made the blood congeal in my veins,—"it is but right, and I know all men love justice, that as you have had your wishes realized, you should satisfy mine."

"What want you of me!" said I, proudly.

"That you will know when I seek the want at your hands," he replied. "I hope you will be as willing to comply with my request as I have been to gratify yours. Till then, farewell! Like the generous bishop, I can give you nothing but my blessing! Hark! The people are shouting in the street! Your carriage is rolling up to the door, and the delighted populace huzza with all the strength of their lungs. They have often expressed their approbation of things equally empty. I leave you to the enjoyment of popularity, power, and literary eminence. Adieu till we meet again!"

Saying these words, Mephistophiles fixed his eyes upon me with a meaning in their hot glances that made me tremble, and, bowing, as if in mockery of human formality, disappeared. Although I was rejoiced at being freed from the evil influence of such a companion, his departing words made a powerful impression on my mind. I felt an uneasi-

ness I could not remove. The increasing shouts of the crowd beneath my windows at last withdrew my attention from that unpleasant subject ; and when my servants opened the street door, and I appeared on the step, I took off my hat and bowed to the people, as they rent the air with their tumultuous cheers, and the ladies in the adjoining balconies waved their handkerchiefs. I forgot everything but the proud gratification of being the most powerful and most popular man in the country. As I lolled at ease in my carriage, and the shout of the distant crowd came like music to my ear, I thought how glorious a thing it was to be thus distinguished—thus favoured :—to be the first man of the first kingdom in the world—to rule the destinies of a nation that had no superior ; and my pride appeared swelling to such an extent, that the whole globe appeared scarcely large enough to contain my greatness.

I had made a call in the neighbourhood of Kew, and, ordering my equipage to wait for me at a place appointed, I walked through Kensington Gardens. As I strolled along by the Serpentine Water, with my thoughts most agreeably engaged upon myself and the gratifying state of my affairs, my attention was all at once attracted by the singular behaviour of a respectably dressed man, standing at a little distance from me. As I gazed, I saw him take a desperate leap from the bank, and plunge in the middle of the stream. At first, I imagined that the man was going to swim across in his clothes for a wager ; but when I observed him suddenly come up again, and as suddenly sink, obeying the impulse of the moment, I sprang into the water, and swimming to the spot where he last sank, dived down. I searched about in every direction, but could see nothing of the body. In a state of the greatest anxiety, I rose to the surface to take breath. As I prepared to dive again, I observed something dart up at my side. I made a clutch at it. It sank from my grasp. It dived rapidly in the same direction, and fortunately managed to get a firm hold of some portion of a wet garment. Pulled down by the dead weight I held, I but slowly rose.

The accident was seen by several persons on both sides the water ; a run was immediately made for the boat, and, as I once more came to the surface with my lifeless burden, I was taken into it in a state little better than that of my companion. We were conveyed to the nearest house, and

those methods promptly employed which are used for restoring suspended animation. I quickly recovered; but it was not till after continued exertion had been made, that symptoms of returning life were observed in the body of the suicide. I had not observed the countenance of the person whom I had thus been the fortunate means of rescuing from a watery grave. We had been placed in separate rooms during the time we were under medical treatment. My person was known, and every possible respect was shown me; my companion was a stranger to all, and might perhaps have been less carefully attended to than the urgency of his case demanded, had I not insisted that he should be treated with the same care as myself. I had received a change of clothes from my own servants, who, having heard of the accident, had hastened to me in the utmost consternation; but before I took my departure, I desired to see the stranger. Nothing could exceed my surprise and gratification, when, in the individual I had rescued, I discovered my fellow-student and college friend, Stillborn the Fatalist. I had him instantly conveyed to my own house.

"What could have induced you to commit so rash an action?" said I, as soon as I had got him comfortably settled at home.

"What makes any man attempt to rid himself of existence?" replied my mysterious friend. "Utter weariness of life. I have long been tired of a fruitless opposition to an evil destiny. It is not extraordinary that I should wish to escape from the contest. But fate has not yet done with me."

"I was much surprised by your leaving Göttingen so suddenly," said I, desirous of learning the cause of his strange disappearance.

"What was I to do there?" he abruptly asked, and then in a more melancholy tone of voice observed:—

"The necessity which compelled me to perpetrate deeds of guilt, drove me from the studious quiet of the university. I had for some time previous felt a restlessness which made me dissatisfied with every thing around me. One moment I formed the resolution of wandering about the world to observe all that it contained worthy of notice; and to discover if there existed any universal power superior to and influencing all humanity. The next moment I put my design

into execution. Alone and secretly I journeyed forth. I traversed many countries; I endured all climates; I passed safely through deserts and over seas.

"But Fate pursued me. She tracked my steps like a bloodhound. In whatever corner of the globe I endeavoured to find a home, from thence I was quickly forced by a multitude of evil circumstances, of which I was the agent. I was marked out as the enemy of all my species. Blood lay on my soul as thick as ice on the frozen seas. What was I to do?—Tired as much by my wanderings as I had before been by my inactivity, I returned to England, and took possession of my little property.

"For a short time my life glided on in a more tranquil current. It was then that I first became acquainted with Rachel Withers, the only daughter of a small farmer who lived close to my house. She was young, lovely, innocent, and poor. I thought it was in her power to make me happy, and I felt assured that by raising her above her own station in society, I should make secure of her affection. I paid my addresses to her—she acknowledged that she loved me—and we were married. For a considerable period I fancied that fate had forgotten me, and hugged myself with the belief that in the arms of an angel I was secure from destiny. Poor fool! Deluded wretch! Miserable dreamer!

"I longed most anxiously for children; I looked forward to the birth of my first infant as a tie that would bind me to life and to home. Appearances seemed to accord with my wishes. I became more anxious as my hope seemed nearer its realization. I watched and waited, and waited and watched, in a state of restless impatience. Just as I was congratulating myself on the happy result, my spirit was plunged into the lowest depth of disappointment. The child died in the birth. I recovered from the shock this circumstance occasioned, when I observed there was still a prospect that my dearest wish might be completed. With even greater anxiety than I had previously felt, I gave up my exclusive attention to the one engrossing object of my thoughts. The child was born alive, and then there seemed not a more joyful being in existence than myself. Scarcely a week of such gladness had elapsed before the infant sickened and died. Fate seemed to take an accursed joy in repeating these torturing disappointments. Sometimes the

dear child was allowed to live till its life appeared entwined with my own heartstrings, and then its little flame of life was snuffed out with no more attention to my feelings than if I had known nothing of its existence. Year after year I flattered myself with greater hopes, and endured an increased punishment. Fate laughed at my wishes. I was haunted by fearful sights, and heard familiar voices in my sleep. The innocent victim of my youthful passions, wrapt in its infant shroud, seemed continually to rise before me as if in mockery of my expectations.

"At that time I had one friend ; I lent him moneys ; I did him many important services ; and I felt convinced that I could rely upon his friendship in any extremity. In his society I found a relief from the misery I endured. It so happened that I was suddenly called away from home by the illness of a distant relative. My kinsman recovering, I returned home much sooner than was expected. I immediately proceeded to my wife's bedroom, and found her, Rachel—the innocent, the affectionate, the grateful Rachel!—slumbering in the arms of him I had thought my most devoted friend! Dumb with astonishment, I gazed on the sleepers ; and felt as if being stifled by my own feelings. With a shout that might have stirred the dead, I startled the treacherous pair from their guilty dreams ; and while they gazed on my ferocious looks, half-dead with surprise and affright, I stabbed them both to the heart ! I then fled. Oh, Herbert!" exclaimed the Fatalist, in a voice nearly smothered with emotion, "you little know the terrible agonies I have endured. It is impossible to describe them."

I could not help being powerfully affected by this narrative of his sufferings.

" You have, indeed, had many severe trials !" said I.

" But the doomed draught was not all swallowed !" he replied bitterly : " the dregs remained. In the wild dissipation, the riotous extravagance, the licentious excesses of a town life, I endeavoured to drown the consciousness of my own misery. I became the leader of a circle of profligates as desperate as myself. We made the night day, and the day night ; and feasted, and drank, and continued our debaucheries as long as we remained sensible of enjoyment. We had prolonged a jovial carousal till daybreak, when it

was resolved by all the party that we should proceed to witness an execution about to take place that morning. Singing snatches of bacchanalian songs, we staggered in a body through the almost empty thoroughfares till we came to the Old Bailey. We took up our station immediately before the scaffold, and commenced playing tricks upon each other, jesting about the gallows, and laughing at the spectators. Soon an immense crowd collected all around us; the windows were thronged, and every place within sight seemed filled by persons anxious to catch a glimpse of the dreadful spectacle. The object of every one appeared the same—curiosity; and there was as much laughing and joking going forward as if the occasion that brought them together was a fair or a merry-making. A general 'hush' and the universal standing upon tiptoe told me the tragedy was about to begin. People held their breath and stretched out their necks.

"Presently some persons appeared on the platform. Then a man ascended. He glanced hastily round the crowd with a look of mingled ferocity and fear. He endeavoured to seem indifferent, but the visible trembling of his limbs betrayed his feelings. He was followed by a woman. Her dress was that of the lowest rank, but there was something in her appearance that betrayed a higher origin. She held a handkerchief to her face, as if attempting to shut out the hateful objects by which she was surrounded, and the delicate white hands that kept it in its place assured me that she was no vulgar criminal. I felt interested. A strange sympathy made me pity her unhappy fate. When the executioner was about to fasten her arms behind her, I for the first time obtained a glimpse of her features. 'Oh, God!' exclaimed the Fatalist, clutching my arm convulsively, 'I saw enough to blast my sight for ever! It was Maria! The warm, the fond, the beautiful Italian! She whom I had loved with all the ardour of youth! The early victim of my unguided passions! The companion of my boyhood! I thought at first it could not be; that I was deceived by a resemblance; that the wan face and glaring eyes of the convicted murderer were not those of my once loving and lovely Maria: but the remembrance of her infidelity arose to my mind, and I felt sick and faint. I tried to escape, but I was hemmed in by a countless mob, the

pressure of which fixed me where I stood. I then attempted, by placing my gaze on indifferent things, not to see the terrible object before me. An irresistible attraction kept drawing my eyes towards the criminal. I felt compelled to continue the dreadful scrutiny. A clergyman was by her side praying with deep devotion: but she apparently heeded him not. Her looks were restlessly wandering over the vast multitude beneath her. Our eyes met. Her eyeballs seemed to dilate as she recognised her destroyer; and, with the manner and look of a desperate maniac, she pointed to the spot where I stood, and uttered a piercing shriek, that has since rung in my ears like an eternal knell.

"I was conveyed home insensible. When I recovered to a state of consciousness, it was only to curse the fate that made me the evil thing I am—that compelled me to do the vile deeds I have committed. Life has long felt insupportable; but death has shrunk from me as from an enemy. I am the victim of a destiny more horrible than ever became the curse of any human being; and the only unfriendly act you ever committed towards me, was rescuing me from the grave, in which I sought to bury my unparalleled miseries. But you only obeyed the dictates of a necessity that has made us both what we are. I am still bound to the rack, and fate still directs the torture! There is no mercy, there is no end!"

BOOK THE SIXTH.

CHAPTER I.

My sudden unpopularity.—Ministerial miseries, and political intrigues.
—The singular disclosures made by the magic mirror of the conduct of my colleagues.—My last speech in Parliament, and extraordinary duel with the viscount.

My popularity had become so universal, and my influence so commanding, I fancied that whatever line of policy I thought it necessary to adopt would be agreeable to the people. It was evident to me that some members of the

senate of the ultra-Radical side were insiduously attempting to create a republican spirit in the country; were secretly aiming at the destruction of the monarchy, and an attack upon the rights of property. Relying upon the good sense of the people, I determined to combat the mischievous theories of the Destructives. Upon the first occasion an attempt was made to introduce into the legislature a measure of a dangerous character, I opposed it with all my own influence as an orator, and all the power I possessed as the head of the administration. The Radicals, who had cheered me on as long as I advocated their measures, immediately declared war against me. The fiercest hostility to the government, and the most bitter abuse of myself as its chief, then commenced. The liberal papers pursued a system of attack towards me, which had never been exceeded in malignity. The most atrocious falsehoods were invented; the vilest insinuations used. I was accused of the basest treachery; I was convicted of the grossest corruption. My private life was dragged before the public eye in all the deformity in which hatred could array it; and every public act in which I had participated was clothed with so many misrepresentations, that none but the ignorant or the unprincipled could recognise it as mine. I was painted as a monster—I was held up to public scorn—I was declared the enemy of the people.

The people, on whose good opinion I had relied to support me in the struggle, seemed to forget in a moment all their former idolatry. They took up the cry, and continued it with a ferocity I imagined unparalleled. Did a crowd of the lower orders collect in the street—they were listening with delighted ears to some wretched doggrel written in abuse of the ministry; was a throng of idle persons surrounding a print-shop—they were laughing at a ridiculous caricature of the prime minister. My carriage, which had been so often dragged through the streets by the applauding multitude, never made its appearance without being saluted with yells and groans that seemed to proceed from a pack of hungry wolves; and if I was recognised inside, a shower of mud and missiles was directed towards my person. I was continually honoured by threatening letters with anonymous signatures; rumours of plots to overturn the government were repeated daily; and I scarcely ever rose in the

morning without receiving the knowledge of a conspiracy, the object of which was to assassinate me before the morrow. In short, I suddenly became *the most unpopular minister that had ever existed!*

About this time I discovered that my expenses were far exceeding my income. The state of splendour in which I felt obliged to live, the grand entertainments I continually gave, my immense establishment and prodigal liberality, could only be kept up by an expenditure more than double my official income, and the proceeds of my private property. It was certainly a great satisfaction to know that my cabinet dinners would have gratified Sir Dumpling Porringer, or any other refined epicure—and that my entertainments were the admiration of foreign diplomatists and native fashionables; but I saw that this magnificent style of living would not continue much longer. My funds were exhausted—my debts overwhelming. To apply to my uncle for assistance was a resource I never could think of. As a last hope, I wrote to the steward at Melcombe, urging him to make use of every exertion to forward me a supply of money. I received from him the following letter :—

“ HONOURED SIR,

“ Your honour’s favour of the 17th instant came safe to hand. Have endeavoured to satisfy your honour’s commands, but have not met with success. Farmers complain of high rents and bad crops. Tenants grumble and won’t pay. Labourers are idle and dissolute. Three incendiary fires took place last night on the Melcombe estate; every rick in each yard burnt to the ground, and nothing but riots and confusion in every parish. Farmer Bull refuses to pay tithes; Master Forge declares he won’t pay taxes; and none of the tenants are able or willing to come forward with their rent. Never did things look so uncommon bad. There’s no doing anything with the people. They burned your honour in effigy last Monday in the town, in a manner quite horrible to relate; and the Rev. Mr. Thoroughgood has had his windows smashed to nothing. I tremble every night I go to bed, expecting to wake in the morning with my throat cut from ear to ear; and Mrs. Cordial goes into ‘sterics whenever she hears a gun fired off. Every part of the house is barricadoed, and all the men-servants are well

armed. Nearly all the women, and some of the men, have left. They were too frightened to stay. The rest of us have determined to do our duty to your honour, and guard the premises. I never sleep without a sword in my hand and a pair of pistols under my pillow ; and never go out after dark, for I was shot at from behind a hedge as I was returning from the town last week. Your honour can't imagine what a set of idle, murderous wretches the people have become.

"With regard to cutting the timber, your uncle won't allow a stick to be carried off the land. His lordship's orders are imperative. Am afraid mortgaging the Herbert property will be of no use. With things in such a state, no price could be got. My lord's so very particular about harassing the tenants, that I don't like to distrain. Am sorry your honour's so much in want of money. Hope no offence ; but my respected grandfather, who served your honour's noble uncle's father, had a maxim which I have most religiously attempted ever to hold in view. He always said—and he said it to my father, and my father said it to me—*Take care of the brawns !*

"Hoping to send your honour better news,

"I am,

"Your honour's humble servant at command,
"TIMOTHY WHISP."

To add to my perplexities, a division in the cabinet was created. A section of the ministry, headed by the Earl of Carbon, an ill-tempered and ambitious nobleman, was desirous of encouraging republican measures. In this he was joined by Lords Lavender and Gulliver. I opposed every proposition of the kind ; most of my coadjutors supported me ; and Lord Bubble and Squeak, who filled the same office he had held during the preceding administration, and who, I discovered, now frequently abused both Carbon and Lavender in the public prints, appeared to be of the same opinion as the majority. I had no reason to doubt Lord Bubble's powerful co-operation ; for no member of the cabinet seemed to entertain so warm a friendship for me, and none had supported my policy with so perfect a zeal as had distinguished the parliamentary conduct of my right honourable colleague. Thinking myself secure in my posi-

tion, I was not so anxious to make myself more agreeable to the popular party. I certainly felt deeply annoyed at the fickleness of the people; but I fancied that they would soon return to a proper sense of my merits, and be enabled to discern the motives which had occasioned the enmity of their leaders towards my government.

Although Mr. Buckram and his followers at this time waited upon me with the intention of persuading me to resign my seat for the borough of Brocoli, as I no longer represented the opinions of my constituents; and although deputations from all parts of the country were continually presenting petitions, calling upon his majesty to dismiss his ministers,—I received all with the same courtesy, and dismissed all with a similar answer. I found power more easy to obtain than to resign.

The court party were not at this time idle. I knew that they were busily manœuvring to drive me from office. I had for some time entertained an idea that my ministry would be much strengthened if I could gain one or two talented and influential Conservatives to supply the place of Lord Carbon and his turbulent adherents; for by so doing I should gain the support of a powerful party, and get rid of my troublesome colleagues. I accordingly opened a negotiation with Sir Pensive Placid, with whom, although always at political variance, I had ever been on terms nearly approaching to social intimacy. Mutual respect of each other's talents had divested our individual opposition of that rancour which usually disgraces party warfare. I intrusted the letter to the care of a mutual friend, to be considered as a confidential communication. I was waiting with some anxiety for the reply, for the dissensions in the cabinet and the fierce hostility of my opponents threatened the administration with destruction, when Lord Bubble and Squeak called upon me. He was, as usual, all smiles and congratulations; was eloquent in praise of the firmness I evinced in the manner I was carrying on the government, and was bitterly sarcastic upon the men and measures of the opposition. I felt half inclined to inform him of my negotiation with the court party; but on second thoughts, I fancied it would be more advisable to wait till I knew the result.

After he had taken his departure, I noticed under the chair on which he had sat a letter that had evidently dropped

from his pocket. I picked it up with the intention of forwarding it immediately to his lordship's residence ; but, to my utter astonishment, I observed that it was directed, in his lordship's handwriting, to the editor of one of the most popular of the public papers. What principally occasioned my surprise was, that there had lately appeared in that very journal a series of attacks upon myself as prime minister, far exceeding in virulence anything of the kind which had been attempted ; and as it frequently alluded to matters only known to a member of the cabinet, I had entertained a strong suspicion that the information had been afforded by Lord Carbon, whose vanity and ambition, I thought, would not allow him to be particular in his efforts to become popular. I instantly broke open the note. No language can describe the rage and mortification I felt as I read a malignant attack upon myself in exactly the same caustic style which had distinguished the articles in the newspaper. I at first thought of hastening to my treacherous colleague, exposing his baseness, and calling him to account for his infamous conduct ; but, upon cooler reflection, it appeared to me that I could punish him with more certainty when I had acquired the assistance of Sir Pensive Placid and his friends. I therefore waited with increased anxiety for a reply to the communication I had sent. After a delay, which I thought would never terminate, I received, through the same channel I had employed, the following letter. It commenced thus :—

“ Carlton Terrace.

“ My dear Lord — ”

“ My dear lord ! ” I exclaimed, as I commenced reading ; “ how could Sir Pensive make such a blunder ? he is well aware I have no title.” But I continued the perusal.

“ I need scarcely say, I feel particularly honoured with the offer you have made me. I could not feel the slightest objection to become the coadjutor of such eminent statesmen as the Paymaster of the Forces, the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the President of the Board of Trade, the Lords of the Treasury, and other influential members of the present government, who, you tell me, are as earnest as yourself in desiring my co-operation, for the purpose of forming a more conservative ministry ; but, upon mature deliberation, I cannot convince myself of the propriety of accepting office at the present moment, although

invited to do so by so many flattering circumstances : and the desire I have ever evinced during my parliamentary career to preserve a character for consistency, forms an insurmountable barrier to my ever becoming a political associate of a party, however distinguished it may be, whose policy I have always felt it my duty to oppose.

"The purport of the note with which you have honoured me shall be kept strictly confidential.

"And believe me, my dear lord,

"With sincere esteem,

"Your lordship's very obliged and devoted
"PENSIVE PLACID."

This letter was to me an enigma. I read it, and re-read it, and yet remained as ignorant of its meaning as I was at first. It was no reply to my communication. It contained nothing which had the most remote allusion to it. I had not mentioned the names of my colleagues, although I felt assured of the willingness to support me of some of the individuals named by the writer. Puzzling my brains to discover what it all meant, I kept turning over the letter in my hands, till my eyes fell upon the superscription ; and there, to my great astonishment, I read—

"To the Right Honourable

"Lord Bubble and Squeak.

"Private."

The enigma was solved in a moment. The newspaper satirist had been intriguing, in conjunction with some of the very men on whom I thought I could most rely, to drive me from the cabinet ; and was endeavouring to obtain the support of the court party, at the time I was intent upon the same object. A mis-delivery of the different replies Sir Placid had written to our communications had enabled me to discover this fresh instance of the treachery of my specious colleague. How I hated his vulgar physiognomy and lank length of body ! But in spite of the accumulating difficulties of my position, of my great unpopularity with the people, of the violent opposition of my opponents, and of the secret machinations of my colleagues, I determined to continue the struggle. Of the support of the king I felt certain. He had distinguished me with the most marked

kindness. The court party, I thought, might be gained over by proper management. I resolved to use every exertion to continue in the high office I held, that I might afterward laugh at the intriguers who were opposing me. I had sacrificed too much to obtain power to resign its honours so readily as my enemies desired. Was I tamely to become the victim of the very men who owed to me the influence they possessed? I had made them what they were, and now I resolved to reduce them as speedily to their former insignificance. It would be an appropriate punishment for their ingratitude.

I had heard much of "the sweets of office," but I had long since ceased to enjoy them. With the abundant patronage I possessed, I could not satisfy one quarter of the applicants for places; and whenever I bestowed a gift, it never failed to bring upon me the enmity of the disappointed. I lost the support of the Duke of Cottesmore because I failed to make Jack Bounce's son one of my secretaries. I gained the opposition of other influential persons in consequence of refusing demands equally unreasonable. Threatened by the mob, bullied by their leaders, abused by the Tories, and distrusted by the Whigs, I had enough to do to withstand the attacks of other parties and the jealousy of my own. Ambition suffers more than it enjoys.

The magic mirror, which, during my political existence, had served me so frequently and well—betraying to me the secrets of foreign courts and the intrigues of their diplomatists, disclosing the intentions of my enemies, and their most hidden transactions at home and abroad,—was now brought into operation, that I might learn the concealed proceedings of my friends. *Friends!* Such friends are worse than avowed enemies.

After giving orders that I was not to be disturbed, I brought out the mirror from its place of security; and pouring from the antique vial the requisite number of drops within the mystic circle upon the plate, with restless eagerness I watched the result. I desired to learn the present proceedings of my plotting associate. As soon as the vapour had dispersed, I discovered a man dressed in a respectable suit of black, sitting in an easy chair, in a room full of books, apparently engaged in writing a letter. I recognised the sallow complexion and mean person of Lord Bubble

and Squeak. He was in his own library; alone. A forbidding frown upon his brow, and the restlessness of his looks, interpreted the uneasiness of his thoughts. He threw down the pen he had held in his hand, and walked with hasty strides several times across the room ; sometimes stopping in his walk as if in deep reflection, and moving his lips as if muttering something to himself. A footman, bearing a letter, entered the apartment. The servant had scarcely disappeared, when his master, with an appearance of extraordinary delight, opened the note, and commenced perusing its contents. As he read, his features wore an expression of mystery. He looked as if he did not comprehend the meaning of the writer. When he finished the note he seemed surprised and confused ; commenced reading the letter again : looked still more puzzled as he proceeded, and all at once gave a glance at the direction. The start of surprise—the confusion—the deep uneasiness which Lord Bubble and Squeak betrayed, convinced me that he had been perusing the letter Sir Pensive Placid had intended for me. What its contents were I had no means of ascertaining ; but judging from the dissatisfaction my worthy associate evinced while reading them, I guessed that they were favourable to myself. After remaining a considerable time wrapped up in profound meditation, a smile of a peculiar meaning appeared on Lord Bubble's unprepossessing features ; and hastily snatching up his hat, he left the apartment.

The next scene the magic mirror presented to me was a large chamber, scantily furnished. At the head of an oblong table was seated Lord Carbon, and near him I recognised many of the most influential of the ultra-radicals. There was O'Blarney, the Irish agitator ; M'Unit, the Scottish economist ; Dr. Slush, the English leveller ; and many others of less influence : but nearly all were mischievous demagogues, dangerous republicans, and fierce Destructives ; men I knew capable of taking the most desperate measures to destroy the monarchy, and erect for themselves an absolute power upon its ruins. And with such a set as this had the weak and ambitious Carbon associated ! He appeared at that moment addressing them, and their noisy plaudits interrupted his address. A door opened, and, to my great surprise, Lord Bubble and Squeak entered the room. He was received with demonstrations of welcome by all the

company, except Carbon, who seemed to look upon him suspiciously. Shortly afterward he commenced speaking ; and I could see by the deep attention of his audience, and the powerful excitement under which he laboured, that his speech was both extraordinary and interesting. I was not at a loss to discover the purport of his harangue, when I saw him take from his pocket Sir Pensive Placid's letter to me, and, after reading it aloud, throw it upon the table for the inspection of his enraged and malignant companions.

I had seen enough. It was evident that Bubble, disappointed of the support of the court party, and fearing that I was acquainted with his treachery, had flung himself into the arms of the Destructives, whose favourite he had been as long as he had continued a commoner and had opposed the government. I saw the increasing difficulty of my position. I became aware of the almost hopelessness of withstanding the opposition I had raised, yet I clung to power as a miser clings to his gold. Rage, ambition, pride, and revenge urged me to hold on to the giddy eminence I had attained. I would defy the factious, and expose the intriguing. If my enemies succeeded in their efforts to hurl me from my superiority, I felt assured they would raise a yell of triumph all over the country. The thought was madness. In a violent phrensy of contending passions I passed several hours forming schemes of future policy, and creating visions of coming greatness. I saw that no time was to be lost. A ministerial measure of the utmost importance, which had drawn the most virulent attack from the opposition, would be decided in the course of the evening ; and by the result of the division I knew the ministry must stand or fall. I now looked upon the measure with considerable uneasiness ; for the Whigs had hitherto given it a very lukewarm support ; the Destructives had denounced it as ineffective and oppressive ; and although some of the Conservatives avowed its utility, others strongly objected to it as a dangerous innovation.

I entered the House of Commons in a state of great anxiety, and took my usual seat on the treasury bench, with less confidence than I had ever felt since my acceptance of office. The House was more than usually crowded. Every member looked as if expecting some extraordinary occurrence ; and I thought I observed in the glances of the leaders of the op-

position a triumph they vainly endeavoured to conceal. My breath grew thick, my heart beat violently, and only by a strong effort of mental energy I recovered the power of appearing unconcerned. I watched the Conservatives, but they looked reserved and stately. Sir Pensive was not in his place. My colleagues smiled, and seemed confident. The hypocrites! Their artifices had now no other effect than to strengthen the resolution I had formed to unmask their treachery and triumph over the malice of my enemies.

The important subject of debate was introduced by Mr. Perriwinkle, a young dandy diplomatist, one of the under-secretaries of state, who eulogized its merits; but so tamely, that it was evident he defended it against his inclination. I paid no attention to what he, or the half-dozen members that followed him, said—it was not worthy of attention. O'Blarney rose. He was a bloated, big, blustering, bullying, begging, bouncing, blundering, bragging, bothering Irishman, with a fierce brogue and a swaggering air. He had always signalized himself among the most virulent of my opponents; therefore I was in some respects prepared for what was to come. He first opened a battery upon the measure in his peculiar vituperative strain, but shortly changed his object of assault and commenced an attack upon myself, so coarse, so gross, and personal, that I found the greatest difficulty in restraining myself from beginning a reply that would have placed me in the hands of the officers of the House. Such a result would have been a triumph to him; so I contented myself with regarding him and his philippics with a searching and humiliating scorn. He concluded a speech of several hours' duration by moving, as an amendment, "That this bill be read this day six months." M'Unit rose to second the amendment; and the Scottish economist, though he did not attack me for what I had done, was quite as abusive as his predecessor, in denouncing what I had *not* done. I had not removed certain taxes; I had not discontinued certain pensions; I had not abolished certain laws; I had not attempted to create a cheap and popular government; consequently I had only proved myself the most incapable minister that had ever disgraced the country and impoverished the people. The man was a vulgar, noisy utilitarian; one who would always be discontented while he thought anything

was to be got by it. I felt I could have given him and his party a castigation more severe than any they had received at my hands ; but I appeared to treat the matter with the most perfect indifference.

In a state of the deepest anxiety I was waiting to learn the policy of the court party, for if I could be assured of their co-operation my position would be safe. Sir Pensive, to my great uneasiness, did not appear, and no sign was evinced by his influential adherents that I could interpret to my own satisfaction. When M'Unit resumed his seat I was called upon by several members, but I did not choose to obey the summons. My colleague, Lord Lavender, one of the Carbon *clique*, then rose. He was a man of some ability and less principle, who, during his parliamentary career, had changed his opinions to every corner of the political compass. Why I had placed confidence in such a man, may well be asked ; but, though not a brilliant, he was an experienced statesman, and might be employed till I could procure a more trustworthy colleague. His speech, as I expected, announced a difference of opinion existing in the cabinet regarding the measure before the House, and, with a very plausible appearance of sincerity, expressed his lordship's intention of not to give it his vote. This declaration was listened to with universal interest, the excitement was becoming more general, and I experienced increased anxiety. Sir Pensive was not in his place ; I had received no communication ; I was completely in the dark as to the policy of his party.

To my infinite astonishment, the next speaker was Viscount Lupin. He had the temerity to utter a flippant attack upon the manner in which I had fulfilled the duties of my office ; and the opposition cheered him on. I had borne unmoved the abuse of the malignant Radicals ; I had seen, without betraying uneasiness, the treachery of my colleagues ; I had heard, without manifesting any disquiet, the desertion of my supporters ; but the impertinence of this puppet, who had never opened his mouth half a dozen times since his father's influence had given him a seat in the legislature, was unbearable. I rose to reply. There was instantly a confused humming, that died away into the most perfect silence. Lupin was the first upon whom I poured out the torrent of indignation I had so long restrained ; and as

I was not particularly choice in my language, the viscount received a castigation that must have stung him to the quick. I then defended the measure which had been the object of such universal attack, and denounced the narrow policy of those who had given it their opposition. After a rapid review of my ministerial life, in which I placed, in a proper light, the important changes I had introduced in the constitution, the liberality of my government, its excellence and economy, I proceeded to expose the vile conspiracy into which some of my colleagues had entered for the purpose of driving me from office and keeping themselves in power.

The most intense excitement prevailed during the expression of these statements. Among the crowd, under the gallery, I observed Lords Bubble and Carbon, doubtless much surprised at the knowledge I disclosed of their intrigues. On the former I resolved to have no mercy. I described the attempt he had made to gain the co-operation of the court party—proved its failure by reading the letter of Sir Pensive Placid—and then related his immediate junction with the Radicals. The commotion in the House increased to an extraordinary degree. “Hear! hear!” was loudly and universally called. Every one seemed astonished. It was evident that I had created a schism between the Whigs and the Radicals—nothing was left me now but to secure the support of the Conservatives; and although I had been speaking upwards of four hours, was almost exhausted by my great exertions, and had become painfully sensible that my only chance of success depended upon the effect I could produce upon my hearers, I continued my now less hopeless task with a supernatural energy that seemed like an *avalanche* to sweep every impediment before it.

“What has created the hostility of honourable members to this measure?” I inquired. (“Hear! hear!” from Mr. O’Blarney.) “It has been abused, and I have been abused, without reason or mercy; but as long as abuse is not argument, and may in some instances become a distinction, neither the measure I have produced, nor the conduct I have adopted, can suffer from the ordeal through which they have passed. Never has any bill been so greatly distinguished—never has any minister been so highly honoured. I cannot be too grateful to the opponents of both, for the zeal they

have shown in exalting them so much above my expectations. There has not been one reasonable objection made to the provisions of this bill. ("Hear! hear!" from Mr. M'Unit.) I thank the honourable member for his cheer, but I feel convinced of the correctness of my arithmetic. (A laugh.) The measure has been condemned for its inefficiency; yet no attempt has been made to show in what it is deficient. It is said not to go far enough. ("Hear!" from the Radicals.) Yet no one has endeavoured to prove that it does not proceed the full distance of safe legislation. ("Hear!" from the Whigs.) In attempting innovations, whatever may be their nature, great care should be taken that they satisfy the object for which they are made. (Cheers from the opposition.) But when, through the natural decay of age, a portion of so cherished a fabric as our ancient constitution has become useless or dangerous, it is the duty of a wise statesman, while he makes the remedy effectual, to see that no injury is done to the original structure. (Cheers from the Tories.) Such has been my policy in every act that has distinguished my administration, but more conspicuous does it appear in the present measure. Its object is reformation—its spirit renovation. (Renewed cheers from the Tories.)

"I am not at a loss to account for the hostility with which, in the exercise of my official duties, I have been regarded both within and without this house during the latter portion of the present session. It is not because I have reduced the burdens of the people—it is not because I have encouraged the progress of intelligence—it is not because I have secured peace abroad and prosperity at home—nor does it arise in consequence of my having endeavoured to legislate with equal advantage to the poor and the rich—the powerful manufacturer and the oppressed mechanic—the agriculturist, the merchant, the shopkeeper, the labourer, and all classes and conditions of men; but this frantic and senseless opposition has no other cause but my determination to preserve all that is valuable in the institutions of this favoured country. (Great cheering.) A democratic spirit has been industriously spread over the surface of society, under the fostering care of a few mischievous persons, who can only live in the elements of discord and disaffection. ("Hear! hear!") The ignorant and unthinking multitude have been opposed to property and law. ("Hear! hear!")

The state has been treated with contempt, and religion held up to ridicule. ("Hear! hear!")

"An honest and patriotic statesman, loving with earnestness and sincerity of heart every portion of the constitution of these realms deserving universal veneration and regard, I opposed, and will oppose with all the energy of life and strength, every innovation that seeks to endanger its existence, or lessen its worth ; and although I may, by so doing, draw upon myself all the violence of mob clamour, and all the fury of mob agitators, while there remains a prospect of my continuing these exertions to the advantage of the king's government, to the honour of the country, and to the happiness of the people, if the tumult and the fury which exist at this moment were a thousand times greater, and a thousand times more malignant, I would still pursue the line of conduct I from the first adopted, and still advocate the policy I now defend. (Loud and continued cheering.) To the lovers of order—to the friends of good government—to all who possess education or property—to every individual who cherishes ideas of virtue and justice, I appeal. Support this measure, and all that is honourable in your institutions will be placed on a foundation that cannot be shaken : oppose it, and your laws and liberties—the gradations of rank, and the influence of property—whatever you most value and most honour in the land, will be swept away by the mischievous spirit of democracy, and overwhelm you in their perfect and irreparable ruin."

For some time after I sat down I was unconscious of what was going forward. My anxiety had become so painfully oppressive, that I seemed to lose all sense of sight and sound. I could hear nothing but an indistinct murmuring ; I could see nothing but a confused mass of black and shapeless objects. The place seemed to be going round in a ceaseless whirl. During this period my heart beat against my breast, as if attempting to burst from its prison ; my tongue was dry and hot in my mouth, like a lump of burning earth ; and my breath came in short spasmodic expirations, as if each intended to terminate my existence. Little know the world how much ambition suffers ! In this state I remained till the division was announced. I was left in a miserable minority ! I rushed from the place as if escaping from a pandemonium of demons, with all the pains of hell

crushing me on every side. In the lobby I was stopped by Lord Lupin, who appeared to have been waiting for me. I was about to pass him with a furious execration, when he held me by the arm, and whispered something in my ear about immediate satisfaction. I regarded him with a glare of savage ferocity that made him start back in alarm.

"Now!" I muttered, in a voice scarcely human.

"Follow me," he replied.

The hate I could have lavished upon my triumphant opponents was concentrated upon my successful rival. I followed him in all the rage of disappointed ambition—with all the fury of deadly revenge. It was long after midnight, and the streets must have been quiet and deserted; but I passed on unregardful of anything, but the chaos of tumultuous passions raging in my own heart. Neither of us spoke a word. At last the viscount stopped before a large house; and opening the door with a latch-key, made a sign for me to enter. He led the way to a parlour, in which two candles were burning; then producing a pair of duelling pistols, he offered them for my choice; afterward, taking a light in his hand, and motioning me to do the same, he conducted me into a garden—at least I supposed it to be a garden. All was pitch dark. I could hear nothing but the rustling of some neighbouring trees, and the candles threw an uncertain light upon the gravel path and a portion of a gloomy brick wall. From the time we left the lobby of the House of Commons to the present moment both had kept a profound silence.

"Herbert!" said he, at last, in a subdued voice, "I have been long aware of your enmity towards me, and have regarded it with a similar feeling. Your gross insults recently delivered in the House have rendered such a state of existence unendurable. One of us must die. I shall go to the end of this walk; and when you see me returning, you may either advance or wait till I approach before you fire. Should I fall, you can easily secure your safety by immediate flight; should that fate be yours, I have the same means of escape."

I testified my acquiescence in the arrangement, and Lupin advanced up the walk. He seemed to have about him all the coolness of a professed duellist. He was a duellist, and had never missed his man. I felt totally unfit for an affair

of this nature. My brain was confused—my hand unsteady: but I thought I was engaged in a contest of life and death with a hated rival—him who had robbed me of Dora, him who had assisted in my recent defeat; and I clenched my teeth, and planted my limbs firmly on the earth in all the desperate fierceness of revenge. I watched the flickering light approaching through the thick darkness. It came nearer and nearer, making the figure of my enemy more discernible every moment. I held the light up with a firm grasp, but did not stir. I waited for a closer approach and a sure aim. Still he did not fire. He advanced within a few paces. The candle he held threw an unsteady light upon his pale face and bloodless lips. How I looked I know not—how I felt I can scarcely tell; I had no sensation; I had ceased to think; I had forgotten to breathe; life, action, and reflection had deserted me. From this state of trance I was aroused by the report of a pistol, and by feeling a stream of hot blood running down my left arm. I fired at the same moment, and beheld the light fall from Lupin's hand, as he made a convulsive bound forward and fell on his face at my feet. A deep groan was followed by a dead silence.

Gazing in a sort of stupefaction on the lifeless body, a wild unearthly laugh I knew too well sounded close to my ear. I dashed down the remaining light and fled.

CHAPTER II.

I resolve to make trial of the virtues of the charmed draught.—The result.—The manner in which I am affected on my return to my native village, by the beauty of its scenery.—The struggles of the mind.—The good curate wishes to convince me that Dora is innocent, and the plan he adopts to ensure his desire.

"WHEN will this weary fever end?—will the night never cease?—will the day never dawn?" I exclaimed with all the fretful impatience of a weak invalid after a long confinement to the bedroom, and a prolonged acquaintance with the nauseous remedies of the physician. I drew aside the

curtains with the hope of seeing something which should draw off my thoughts from the tedious horrors of delirium. My kind and constant nurse, Mrs. Cordial, had left the room, and the book she had been reading lay closed upon the table. By its side was a solitary candle, whose feeble rays clothed the darkness of the chamber with a thousand terrors. Glasses and bottles, empty and full, seemed grouped together in countless numbers, and most of them contained the filthy drugs I had been so often obliged to swallow. Poor fools ! They had procured remedies for the fever of the body, but none had attempted to lessen the fever of the mind. I sunk back upon my pillow, sleepless, restless, and in pain.

"How long have I been in this state ?" I asked myself: but I possessed no means of judging. My thoughts then wandered back to my sudden and humiliating discomfiture. I gnashed my teeth and writhed my limbs as I recalled to mind the disgrace I had suffered. Hurled from office amid the shouts of the multitude and the gratification of my opponents ! Held up to public indignation as an enemy to the people, and pointed at by the world as an incapable minister ! Was ever man elevated so high to be thrust so low ? I was frantic. I compressed my closed hands till the nails entered into the flesh, and then dashed them at random everywhere about me. A sudden thought arose which made me start up from my recumbent position with spasmodic force. Could I regain the power I had lost ? I asked myself. I sat and reflected, staring upon vacancy with looks that might have frightened the boldest heart. I thought of applying to Mephistopheles ; but the strong shudder that shook my body, like an earthquake, warned me from so desperate a resource. How then could I raise my degraded ambition ? I thought of *The Charmed Draught* !

I was promised at the Witches' Jubilee that the gift I then received should accomplish all my desires. Mephistophiles had not allowed me to make trial of its virtues ; but the time, I felt convinced, had now arrived. With renewed life, and with an energy that seemed stronger than life, I left my bed ; and by the light of that solitary candle I sought the little vial. After some search I found it. Although I had used its contents frequently while seeking the assistance of the magic mirror, the bottle still seemed as

full as when first given into my hand. I took up a glass, and poured out the draught which should elevate me to a higher eminence than I had lost, and grant me the power of punishing my accursed enemies.

"Now, ye false and factious crew!" I exclaimed, "ye shall be once more in thy power; and I will use that power, not in the wise and generous manner which occasioned your enmity, but with an iron and selfish influence that shall grind your hearts to dust!"

I raised the brimming goblet between myself and the light that I might, to more advantage, view the sparkling liquid it contained. It was of a clear amber colour—so intensely bright, that my feeble eyes ached as I gazed upon it: and its odour was so powerful and so delicious that it made me giddy as I inhaled its fragrance. With the design of waiting a few moments till I felt more at ease, I placed "The Charmed Draught" upon Mrs. Candour's book. The glass had scarcely touched the volume when it was shattered to pieces with a tremendous explosion; the room became filled with smoke and flame; I was whirled off my feet with a violence it was impossible to resist; and I know not what further occurred till I found myself in bed in a state of extreme debility, raging fever, and with violent pain in every part of my body. I heard voices, and listened.

"He is in a sound sleep now, sir," said a voice I recognised as belonging to Mrs. Cordial. "It has continued some time, and the doctor says it's a favourable symptom."

"What occasioned his dangerous relapse?" inquired my old friend, the Rev. Mark Thoroughgood.

"That's more than any of us can tell, sir," replied the first speaker. "I had left the room about half an hour, just to make some cooling drink that the doctor had ordered, when all at once I heard a sound as if the house had been blown to pieces; and when I returned, I found Mr. Herbert insensible upon the floor, and ever so many little bits of glass sprinkled over my Bible. Mr. Whisp and Thomas placed their master in bed; and he soon became so shockingly delirious, and knocked himself about, and talked so wildly, that we sent off immediately for the doctors, and were obliged to sit up with him the whole of the night. He remained in that state for several days, and I was much afeared

that the dear gentleman was going to leave us for a better world ; but the medicines we gave him had a good effect at last. I don't think he's now in so much danger. If he only gets a little more of his natural rest, he may come round again."

"I hope he may recover!" said the good curate.

"And so do I, your reverence, with all my heart!" exclaimed my faithful nurse. "For though the newspapers have said such shocking things of him, I can only remember him as I've known him from a boy—when he was as gentle as a lamb, and good to everybody. We are not the only persons that care for him ; there's one that loves him better than—"

I could hear no more. The weakness which long illness produces made me incapable of continuing my attention to the conversation. My ideas became confused, and in a few moments were buried in a profound sleep. I awoke refreshed, with less pain and diminished fever. My wound was less troublesome, and my mind more calm. I could again distinguish the voice of my nurse ; but she spoke in so subdued a tone, that I could not ascertain upon what subject she was speaking. As I moved to draw aside the bed-curtains, I heard a light footstep quickly retreating from the room.

"Are you better, sir?" inquired Mrs. Cordial, in her kindest manner, as she approached my bedside.

"Rather," said I, feebly ; "but who was that you were speaking to just now?"

"Me, sir ! was I speaking?" exclaimed the good old lady, in evident confusion. "Oh, it was only some one who assists me in attending you."

"Ha!" said I, and I sunk back exhausted on my pillow.

I recovered, not to my former energies of mind and body—they had departed from me for ever—but to all the sensibilities of life. The good curate had been a frequent attendant in my sick room, endeavouring to amuse, to comfort, and to encourage me. Observing my visible repugnance to religious counsel, he did not force his piety upon me, he rather drew me towards it. I never prayed—I dared not. I seldom thought of prayer ; for what had I, a God-abandoned wretch, to do with supplication to the throne of mercy ?

As soon as I found myself sufficiently convalescent I walked out into the fields. The breath of the pure air came deliciously upon my wan and feverish cheek. Everything looked lovely. The cottages appeared newly built, and their fronts were covered with flowers. The place never appeared arrayed with half so many charms; and as I leaned for support against a stile, I stopped to admire "the old familiar faces" around me.

"Beautiful village!" I exclaimed, with a feeling half melancholy and half pleasure. "Beloved Herbert! Thy gentle stream flows onward with the same rejoicing song that in happier hours filled my heart with melody and gladness! Still are thy verdant fields bossed with the same bright jewels of living gold I once thought the only wealth the world held worth possessing. Ye glorious things! ye still flash upon my eyes your everlasting beauty, with the same divine freshness in which ye used to appear dancing in the morning breeze, or bending your odorous heads beneath the weight of the evening dews! Dear village! Lovely fields! Sweet blossoms! Ye are all unchanged. But I!—I that loved ye so well—that was your companion—that made my home among ye—O God! what am I become? The eyes that delighted in your presence are dimmed. The features your smiles made redolent with health, ambition hath made sickly with disease. The limbs that leaped over your blooming knolls with the gladdening spirit of the young deer, now drag their weary way with all the hopeless helplessness of premature old age! Look at me! Do I possess aught by which I may be recognised? O wretched ambition! O miserable vanity! O unprofitable and accursed pride! Ye have changed this spirit and deformed this body till I hold no likeness of what I was, and stand aloof from the innocence of nature like a thing to be abhorred. Dumb chroniclers of the good I have neglected! ye read to me a bitter and humiliating lesson. While I, by evil thoughts and bad desires, have gone out of my natural path to obtain more than man's share of worldly fame, and have been hurled from a false eminence to the deepest pit of human degradation, ye, clothed in your sweet purity and most divine beauty, have never wandered a step from the sunny dwellings where you were born to possess all men's love; and ye still retain all those everlasting charms which

procure you the fondest place in the hearts of all generations. O why should I live to pollute this fair world with my presence? Let me die! Let me escape from myself! I have become a disgrace—a reproach—an unendurable misery."

I sunk down exhausted upon the green sod. I tried to shut out earth and heaven, and all their glories, from my abased eyes. My heart seemed to swell with the most powerful emotions. I felt the weakness of a child, and scalding tears came trickling through my hands.

In this state I must have remained for some time. It was Sunday, and all breathed quiet and holiness around. The bell to which I had listened had long ceased its sweet chime. Refreshed and strengthened, I arose, and without any definite object, strolled onward. There was a strange confusion of hopes and fears passing in my mind. Now I felt contrite, and tried to flatter myself into the belief that I might atone for the evil of my ways. Then I despaired; and found in my numerous crimes a load that must drag my soul to the lowest depth of perdition. At one moment, the voice of nature seemed to breathe into my ear words of hope and supplication; at the next moment, the tones were those of demons, and I heard nothing but blasphemy and execrations. In this mood I approached the village church—the little, quiet, holy nook in which all the humble Christians of Herbert were offering up their fervent prayers to Heaven. Something seemed to tempt me to enter. Then a laugh of derision forbade me to move. As I came nearer to the church-door, I felt as if under the influence of two contending powers: one whispering words of comfort, and encouraging my progress; the other muttering thoughts of despair, and persuading me to turn back. I entered the threshold, protected by one influence, and threatened by the other.

After I had sat down in my pew, the struggle between my good and evil inclinations continued so forcibly that I was unable to pay any attention to what was going forward. When I looked around, I seemed to meet angelic faces smiling upon me approvingly—again I turned my eyes in the same direction, and every countenance I beheld seemed that of a demon regarding me with a most malicious scorn. As I looked to the pulpit, I thought the venerable features of the good curate changed to the gentle and glorious con-

tenance of one who appeared to be the blessed representative of the Son of God—the next moment came another transformation, and I gazed upon the fierce and sardonic looks of one I really recognised as my evil spirit, Mephistophiles. Now, the voices of the congregation sounded like a choir of cherubim—presently, they seemed to be the yells of fiends. Thus I continued under the influence of these changing impressions till the voice of the choir broke out in harmony, and I listened to the following hymn. The principal singers were the children of the village, dressed neatly, looking rosily, and singing with a sincerity of heart and depth of feeling I could scarcely have expected from them:—

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING.

“ From a sea of trouble I called unto the Lord
 When the waves of darkness fell upon me;
 Even though my spirit did ne'er regard his Word,
 And the sign of evil had been on me.

And I said—‘ O Father ! deliver me from sin !
 From the snares and terrors round about me !
 From the guilt that poisons and tortures me within ?
 From the world of wickedness without me !’

And the hand of glory—the right hand of his might—
 Did he stretch with lovingness before me :
 From the depth of despair I rose to life and light,
 And the joy of holiness was o'er me.

Let us all be joyful, and songs of worship raise,—
 There is hope !—let suppliants implore him ;
 Let our tongues with gladness repeat his holy praise,
 And our souls unceasingly adore him !”

The innocent appearance and unaffected minstrelsy of these young choristers, as much as the sentiments they expressed, inspired me with more pleasurable feelings than I had long enjoyed. I felt as if a load was removed off my breast. The conflict which had recently been so actively carried on was suspended. The only sensation I now endured which seemed extraordinary, was a sense of shame that prevented me from looking around, and I became desirous of hiding myself from the gaze of the people. I held

my head down, and in that position I continued during the delivery of the sermon. No part of the good curate's discourse was lost upon me. The subject was "the Return of the Prodigal Son ;" and that beautiful parable the preacher illustrated in a manner so simple and so natural, that the most ignorant congregation must have been instructed and affected by it. Thus he led his hearers into a holier state of feeling by such powerful persuasions of the excellence of virtue, that all seemed to follow his guidance with an irresistible impulse. There appeared to be so much in his sermon applicable to myself, that I listened to it with interest. Every truth struck home. I felt emotions the most overpowering. So deep an influence did the discourse possess over me that I retained my humiliating position, and reflected upon the wisdom I had heard long after the preacher had concluded. Suddenly I became conscious of the awful stillness by which I was surrounded, and looking up, discovered that I was alone.

As I was returning from the church, wrapt up in a profound and solemn reverie, I heard footsteps near me.

"How beautiful appears everything around us!" exclaimed the Rev. Mark Thoroughgood. "What a feeling of gladness and excellence is breathed over the face of nature ! I never walk out without feeling a more intense enjoyment in the loveliness of this glorious world; and there appears to me in all this bounteous array of innocent pleasures a spirit of such divine intelligence, that my heart is ever rising from admiration into worship. A poet—one of the best, the purest, the most sincere of ~~poets~~—of nature—

" 'Tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings ?'"

I was more gratified than annoyed by this interruption; for there was something so soothing in the conversation of my old friend, that I always felt happier in mind when in his society.

"Yes, 'tis all fair, exquisitely fair!" I replied; "but how evanescent! The sun that flings his golden gifts so liberally on this scene, in a few hours will shrink beyond our sight and leave us all in darkness; the flowers that lift up their heads so proudly from the earth, in a brief season will die, and the earth will become barren. Nothing is *immortal!*"

"Nay, my dear friend!" said the good curate, mildly, "you take a very erroneous and unprofitable view of these things. When the sun sets, does he not rise in other lands, and again appear in all his glory in our own? If the flowers wither, are we not well convinced that in their proper season they will rebloom in all their original freshness? Instead of the hopeless doctrine you have asserted, that everything decays, it is more evident that nothing perishes: the sun never sets, the flowers never die?"

"Then why by this alternate change of light and darkness, of death and life, is human nature continually made the victim of its hopes and fears? Man seems destined to be the sport of two contending powers—good and evil."

"People talk of the secrets of destiny," said my companion, with a smile, "as if they had heard Time babbling them to Eternity, and seem as familiar with the future as if they had discovered some northwest passage to its unknown shores; but those persons who thus talk are ignorant gossips, in whom fate will place no confidence till death becomes a surety for their trustworthiness; and all who pretend such intimacy with 'that bourne from whence no traveller returns,' are too much attached to existence to attempt so hazardous a journey. If those dissatisfied philosophers, who are fond of ever glancing back to the past, or of looking forward to the future, would take the trouble of well regarding the present, the season of human happiness would appear prolonged, because no opportunity of enjoyment would be allowed to escape. 'Take time by the forelook,' while he is within arm's reach—do not attempt to lure him to your side when he loiters among the ancient dwellings of ruin, or drag him back to your feet when he hastens forward

to the shadowy regions of futurity ; for if you act thus, you will soon enough repent having misapplied a portion of your life in such vain and foolish doings. You are surprised, perhaps, to hear me make use of the jargon of the fatalists ; but destiny, in my idea, represents the Divine will.

" But I have not answered your question. In my humble opinion, the lights and shadows of life proceed from an admirable arrangement by means of which the creature is enabled to enjoy and appreciate the worth of all created things. Were nature only to wear one expression of countenance, I am afraid her worshippers would soon grow tired of its uniformity. It is this change, this contrast of which you complain, that makes us more heartily love her attractions. But there is no season, as you imagine, in which nature is left entirely destitute of good. There are degrees of loveliness in her appearances, but no absolute deformity."

We walked on in silence for a few minutes.

" Who erected that row of little cottages ?" said I, pointing to several small and picturesque buildings that appeared to have been recently built.

" Ah, my dear sir !" replied the good curate, with all his amiable enthusiasm, " that is one of the many good works that have originated in the pure and generous heart to which the poor of this neighbourhood owe so much. There has scarcely been a practicable scheme of any value having for its object the moral happiness, the useful education, and the increased comfort of the people, which it has not adopted here. The consequence is, that poverty in this parish is unknown, and ignorance and crime are rapidly disappearing. Every labourer by working on his own bit of ground earns enough to provide for himself and family, and finds himself the tenant of a neat and commodious habitation. His children are well instructed. Those that can work find constant employment, and industrious habits and good morals everywhere prevail."

" But who has conferred these benefits ?" I asked.

" Your young and amiable cousin."

" Mention her not !" I exclaimed, sternly.

" Why not, my dear sir ?" said my companion, with an appearance of much surprise.

" No matter !" I replied. " She has deceived me !—vilely,

basely deceived me ! and I would rather hear any name than hers."

"Indeed ! my dear friend, there must be some mistake," continued the old man, with considerable emotion. "It cannot be. I know her to be incapable of deception. She is the best, the kindest of beings. Be assured you wrong her by so unworthy a judgment. I have known her from a child. I have watched her unpoluted nature in its gradual development, but I never saw the shadow of evil upon its purity."

"Ah!" said I, sorrowfully, "I too kept watch and ward over a shrine I wished to keep free from sacrilege as I thought it free from evil ; but after all my labour, another worshipper was allowed admission into the temple, and all it contained,—all I had so long loved and honoured became, in a brief space, a stranger's property."

"Oh, no !" exclaimed the good curate, with more vehemence than I had ever seen him use. "This cannot be. I have as firm a faith in her goodness, as I feel in the truth of salvation. There is some strange delusion here. Come with me to my humble dwelling, and I will put you in possession of a witness that will convince you better than I can of her unchanged and unchangeable excellence !"

I followed my old friend to his house, without expecting my conviction of Dora's unworthiness to be removed.

"Here !" said he, putting a paper into my hand, "read this ; and if it does not prove to you your error, there is neither truth nor honesty beneath heaven."

I took the manuscript. I found it to be part of a journal in my cousin's handwriting ; and as soon as I reached home I read it. It commenced thus :—

CHAPTER III.

My cousin's journal.—Dora in the world of fashion, and her attempted abduction by Lord Lupin.—Her temptations, her sufferings, and her love.—The manner in which she is affected by my political and literary reputation, and subsequent unpopularity.—The man of the world again.

“ I HAVE observed with increased inquietude the growing animosity of my aunt for Vincent. She never misses an opportunity of endeavouring to prejudice me against him ; and the cause of this unchristian feeling is the attention he pays to Lady Julia Alderney—a rival despot in the world of fashion ! Really, my esteemed friend, I am already tired of the gay life I am leading ; and if I did not keep a journal of my thoughts as you advised me, I am afraid they would become as frivolous as those of my companions. The folly I see around me is beyond your charitable conception. It is quite humiliating. My position has long ceased to be a pleasant one, and the marchioness has not made it more agreeable. Would you think it possible ?—although her ladyship is well aware of the state of my sentiments, she encourages her son in his foolish addresses to me ! I have not seen Vincent for several days, but I hear he is actively engaged upon the business of his election. Do tell me how he looks, and everything he says and does. O, I wish my father would let me go back to Herbert ! I expect to be scolded for this desire : but if you knew what a gay—uncharitable—abominable world I am living in, you would not be surprised at my impatience.

* * * * *

“ Lady Brambleberry took me with her to Almack’s, a name you have doubtless heard. It means a house in which persons of the highest rank and fashion meet, for the ostensible purpose of enjoying the pleasure of dancing. The rooms were crowded with a very brilliant assemblage. In the course of the evening a circumstance occurred, which is as difficult to relate as to account for. I was listening, or rather appeared to be listening, to one of those gentlemanly

triflers who abound in society, when Lord Lupin came and said that his mother was waiting in her carriage for me. Very glad to return home, I took his lordship's arm, proceeded down-stairs, entered the carriage, followed by my companion, and did not perceive till the door was closed, and the horses had started at full speed, that the marchioness was not there. The idea instantly occurred to me, that his lordship had devised this scheme for the purpose of having me in his power. He had frequently avowed the most fervent passion ; but, though I plainly gave him to understand that his attentions were displeasing, he could not or would not believe the sincerity of my refusal. Finding myself thus entrapped, as I felt certain, for some evil—unable to give an alarm, that I might be rescued from my disagreeable situation—and fearing, from my inability to make known my dislike of his lordship, that Lord Lupin might succeed in effecting a clandestine marriage against my inclination, I became so dreadfully excited by my terrors that I fainted.

" When I recovered, I thought I lay in a marble tomb, in the middle of a hall of immense size. I looked up, but could behold no ceiling ; all was utter darkness above me. I looked round, but could see no termination to the chamber : beyond a certain distance all was impenetrable gloom. The only visible things were a multitude of stone colossi surrounding me on every side. Their limbs were of cyclopean proportion ; their garments of a fashion I had never seen ; their countenances were fierce, and their eyes seemed flaming brands, that threw a lurid and unnatural light upon the terrors of the place. Several figures were those of the sphinx ; others represented monsters half human and half celestial ; by these were enormous crocodiles, cranes, bulls, apes, serpents, and dogs ; and their colossal bodies were covered over with hieroglyphic inscriptions. I fancied that I was in one of those fearful chambers that are said to exist in the interior of the great pyramids. Everything seemed Egyptian, mysterious, and idolatrous.

" I cannot say I was not alarmed when I discovered the dreadful situation in which I was placed. I gazed upon every object in fear and wonder ; and those feelings amounted to horror when I found I could not stir from my position, but had become as motionless and cold as the sarcophagus

in which I lay. I possessed the faculties of thought, sight, and sensation—in all other respects I was as one dead. When I became aware of my awful state, and gazed upon the thickening darkness in which I was enveloped, and met the scorching eyes that in all directions were ferociously fixed upon me, I thought that I had died, and that as a punishment for the sins I had committed during existence, I had been condemned to my present dwelling.

“I had scarcely begun to entertain this notion, when I observed a procession of strange-looking creatures advancing, dressed in dark robes, covered with mysterious devices. Each of these individuals appeared to possess the head of a hawk, but their walk was like that of human beings. Chanting a low unearthly sort of chorus, they approached the place where I lay, and surrounded the tomb. They were, as I imagined, the judges of the dead; and one, who seemed superior to the rest, seated himself on the pedestal of a neighbouring sphinx, inquired if any one were present who came as witnesses for the deceased. There was a melancholy silence. During these few moments my sensations appeared most acute: it was evident I had done so little good in the world during my life, that I was not worthy of the slightest eulogy when dead; and the knowledge I thus acquired of the inutility of my existence, impressed upon my mind the conviction, that some unendurable suffering would be my punishment. After a pause, the principal judge, in the same hollow tones he had previously used, called upon the witnesses against the deceased. Instantly a form rose from the earth, similarly clad, and of the like shape as the rest, and, in a voice that made me feel hopeless to hear, commenced an accusation against me. I heard a catalogue of crimes, the mere enumeration of which made me shudder: every unworthy action was laid to my charge: I was branded with all the guilt that it is possible for erring humanity to commit.

“Although I knew myself innocent of every portion of this wickedness, my inability to attempt a defence, I felt, would ensure my condemnation; and there I lay, listening to charges of which I knew myself guiltless, abandoned to the conviction that I could not escape their punishment. The sufferings I then endured were a foretaste of what was to follow. When my accuser had concluded, the presiding

judge called upon his companions to pronounce the sentence. They all, in the same inhuman tone, said ‘GUILTY !’ After which, their chief dilated upon the enormity of my offences and pronounced punishment—

“ ‘LET THE SOUL OF THE DECEASED BE FLUNG INTO THE ABYSS OF ENDLESS TORMENT !’

“ A shape more horrible than any I had perceived approached, with the intention of seizing on my body. The flaming eyes of the colossal idols threw out a greater brilliancy, enabling me to perceive more clearly the increasing perils of my situation ; and my unrelenting judges commenced a wild harmony, resembling a requiem for the dead. The dreadful executioner unto whom I was to be delivered stood for a moment malignantly regarding his victim ; and all at once I seemed to recognise, in the countenance above me, the same demoniac features that have so often haunted my mind. As with a triumphant laugh he prepared to pounce upon his prey, I, in an agony of fear, mentally sought protection of the Divine Providence. In the same moment the dreadful scene, and all its terrors, faded from my sight, and I again became unconscious of existence.

“ When the use of my faculties was restored, I found myself in a superb chamber, reclining upon richly embroidered cushions, surrounded by a circle of beautiful girls, dressed with oriental magnificence, fanning me, and watching my slumbers. The air breathed the most intoxicating perfumes, that rose from fountains which scattered into marble basins showers of delicious odour. In everything there was beauty, luxury, and splendour. The contrast from the former scene was so great, that I experienced sensations of supreme delight; first occasioned by the pleasure I felt in having escaped from the most dreadful doom, and much increased by the influence of the charming scene I now observed. I was drinking in a world of rapture, by imagining how exquisite would be the happiness I might enjoy were there present one loved being, to whom my thoughts as naturally recur as my prayers arise for his felicity, when my attendants, with an abundance of Eastern respect, presented me with coffee of a most aromatic odour, served up in little vessels of filagree gold, ornamented with glittering gems. As I sipped this seductive cordial, I became sensible of a genial glow, that diffused itself throughout my limbs...

" At this time a group of young girls of the most perfect shape and admirable countenance, clad in drapery that heightened the charms it should have concealed, commenced a dance. The graceful dancers appeared to represent by their expressive motions the eloquent history of love ; and as I gazed, a pleasurable excitement stole upon me—I understood, I felt all that was represented—and there only required the presence of one being to complete my happiness. I indulged in these delicious sensations to an excess I have since considered sinful; but they had so imperceptibly stolen upon me that I never thought of resistance until their influence became omnipotent. In the height of this enjoyment I became aware, through my attendants, that some distinguished person approached my apartment. I had not remained in anxiety many moments, before, as every individual in the room fell prostrate on the ground, a noble youth, with beauty far beyond that of any human being I had ever seen, dressed with more than regal splendour in the turban and flowing garments of the Mohammedan prince, advanced, and with every appearance of homage and admiration, seated himself by my side. He made a sign to the attendants, and all disappeared ; then, turning towards me with eyes brilliant with adoration, and features eloquent with beauty, he spoke.

" His voice was sweet and rich, and seemed to find its way to the heart like a strain of charming music heard in happier times. I listened ; and when those gentle and harmonious accents declared the most impassioned adulation—when he acknowledged himself the emperor of a mighty kingdom, and confessed, in deep humility, that all its glories would be valueless in his eyes unless I would share its throne, I felt a momentary flutter at the heart that interpreted how much my pride and ambition were gratified. At any other time I might have dismissed the declaration and the lover, seductive as both were, without the least hesitation and with as little regard ; but the luxury of everything around me—the atmosphere I breathed, the dance I had witnessed, and the feelings in which I had indulged, seemed impregnated with pleasure of so fond and exquisite a nature, that the words of passion appeared to dwell on my ear as a natural consequence ; and when I regarded the rank, and heard the honeyed flatteries, and beheld the more than

mortal beauty, of the being at my side, human and woman as I was, it must not be considered that I turned with indifference from such dazzling temptations. But it was only for a moment. I remembered that there was one to whom even princes must be inferior ; and that any attention paid to the fond idolatry of another was treason against his love. I reproached myself for having encouraged pleasurable feelings he had not occasioned ; and as my imperial lover, with all the insidious gentleness of a devoted worshipper, insinuated his arm round my waist and drew me towards him, I quickly disengaged myself from his touch, and regarded him with looks that expressed anything but encouragement.

" Apparently somewhat surprised, but not disheartened, by his repulse, the noble youth put forth increased powers of pleasing ; and in his melodious voice, so soft and thrilling, and in his expressive eyes, so dark and brilliant, there appeared a thousand new fascinations. My inclination, however, had received an accession of strength that made me combat with these powerful temptations with a full confidence of triumph ; and as he embraced me with more warmth, and attempted to imprint a passionate caress upon my lips, I flung him from me with all the force I possessed, and looked upon him with so powerful an indignation as I thought would prove how hopeless were his endeavours. I had scarcely done so, when, to my extreme horror, I observed the perfect beauty of a countenance I could not help regarding with admiration change into those ugly features I had previously recognised as belonging to the executioner who arose to fulfil the sentence of the judges of the dead. At the same instant a deep sleep came over me. All the delusive scene became wrapped in darkness.

" When I opened my eyes, nothing could surpass my delight when they met the glances of my good and generous Vincent. I did not notice where I was—I did not think of my situation—my thoughts and looks were all for Vincent. It was enough gratification for me to know, that, after escaping from terrors and temptations to which many might fall a prey, I was safe, beyond the reach of evil. It was some time since we had met, therefore the caresses I received did not surprise me. I regarded them as witnesses of the ardour of his affection, and as evidence of his joy at our reunion ; and while I indulged him in those innocent enjoy-

ments I felt my own rapture abundantly increased. The ecstasy of my own feelings rendered me for some time insensible of a strange wildness and violence in his behaviour; but at last his conduct became so different to all that had hitherto distinguished him, that I felt assured he was not *my* Vincent, and in a state of alarm that cannot be conceived, I fervently prayed to Heaven for deliverance from a temptation far exceeding all former perils. Sleep instantly took possession of my senses, and when I woke I found my father and many kind friends watching anxiously over my couch.

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"I have recovered from my indisposition, and have learned the particulars of my abduction. It appears, according to Lord Lupin's acknowledgment to my father, that the viscount designed carrying me off to Scotland, with the intention of there perpetrating a clandestine marriage. In this unjustifiable proceeding I really believe he was encouraged by his mother. Both were well convinced of my disinclination, yet both had continued to persecute me upon the subject. The marchioness had alternately attempted to persuade and intimidate me into an alliance with her son, and had done and said everything which could suit her purpose, to lessen my affection for Vincent; but I paid as little attention to the flatteries and entreaties of the viscount as I did to the falsehoods and inventions of his mother. Seeing that there was no hope of succeeding by mild measures, they determined to have recourse to violence. I was condemned to accept his lordship for a husband, although I disliked him as a lover.

"Lord Lupin having succeeded, by the stratagem I have previously related, in getting me into his power, thought his object was secure. He was not at first much surprised by my swooning, but when I remained insensible far beyond the usual period, he ordered the postillions to drive to the nearest house. I was taken out of the carriage apparently quite lifeless, and, for four-and-twenty hours, every remedy that medical skill could suggest was applied, with the hope of restoring animation. When I was pronounced beyond recovery, Lord Lupin, who had waited in intense anxiety to learn the result, became quite frantic. He returned to town immediately with the utmost speed, to acquaint my father with the unexpected event. My dear father was terribly

afflicted. His grief was most violent. He would receive no consolation, and he bitterly reproached the viscount for having been the occasion of my death. Losing not a moment of time, he proceeded to the house where I lay, and throwing himself on the body, remained in that position for several hours, in all the agony of a parent's sorrow.

"All at once, as he told me, he felt the pulsation of my heart ; at first faint and indistinct, but gradually increasing in power, till it possessed the firmness and regularity of life. Delighted beyond expression at this discovery, my father called in the physicians—medical skill was again employed—my friends crowded round to assist in my recovery—and beneath their rejoicing looks I opened my eyes.

"It appears, then, that for nearly two days I existed in a state of trance ; and that all those perilous encounters with temptation I have described, were the shadowy creations of a dream. I am much surprised, however, at the strong semblance of reality in all I saw and felt. It has left an impression on my mind which will never be erased. I have often heard of strange visions occurring, warning the dreamer of some impending evil, or acquainting him with some unexpected good ; but in the scenes which came before me in my trance, there does not appear any such object. All seems a mystery. I cannot divest myself of the opinion, unnatural and unchristian as it may appear, that some evil influence is visible in this. An idea has haunted me for a long time, that some malignant power is ever endeavouring to lead me into error, and to weaken my confidence in the Divine Goodness. The continual intrusion of unbidden thoughts, that thrust themselves out of the mind, like noxious weeds poisoning the fair plants in whose company they appear ; and the constant visitation of a terrible countenance, rising like a cloud to shut out heaven from my gaze, you tell me are merely the creations of an excited imagination. I wish I could think so. They do not in any way interrupt my devotions, nor can they deprive me of one hope religion has taught ; but their recurrence is perplexing, annoying, and mysterious.

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"My father and Vincent have quarrelled ! What has been the subject of dispute I have not been told ; but I imagine it to be that bane of happiness—politics. You

know Lord Melcombe's notions against the government. It appears that Vincent has thought proper to join that party, and his uncle is so incensed, that he vows he will never speak to him again. I do not know who is wrong—I only know it has made me very unhappy; for my father is continually abusing Vincent, and has made me promise not to see, or hold any communication with him. It is impossible to imagine the wretched state in which I now exist. The marchioness has again commenced her attacks, and she is continually inventing fresh accusations, that I feel assured are as malicious as the being at whom they are levelled is innocent. I pay no attention to her falsehoods, but in Lord Melcombe she has found a willing listener, and she has succeeded in increasing his prejudices against his nephew.

"To add to my distress, my father has not only become reconciled to Lord Lupin, but encourages his addresses, and has informed me that I am to consider the viscount as my future husband. The persecutions I endure are becoming unbearable. Dragged to amusements which only increase my misery—obliged to appear at fêtes, in which I have no interest—forced to listen to the abuse of one whom I know to be all goodness, and to hear the flatteries of another I look upon with aversion—and debarred all knowledge of the feelings of that heart which has ever throbbed in unison with mine—I feel friendless among many intimates—alone in a crowd—and only in the sacred quietness of night, when others enjoy their slumbers undisturbed, dare I indulge in the wretchedness of my own feelings. I have no sleep. I enter the breakfast-room with swollen eyes and an aching heart: but this cannot last; nature will not endure it much longer. Oh, Vincent! if you knew how much I have suffered, you would, at least, think me the more worthy of your love: yet it is better you remain ignorant. I would sooner my pillow remain the only witness of my tears than that the world should be deprived of one smile you might bestow upon it.

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"I have been ill, very ill: the state of mind in which I had existed had such an effect upon my health that life was despaired of. My father was not aware of the cause of my malady till Mrs. Thrift made him acquainted with it; and

she gained from him a promise that Lord Lupin should discontinue his attentions, and that I should be removed from the metropolis. I went to the seaside. The change of air and freedom from persecution did me more good than the physicians. I loved to wander in solitary places upon the cliffs which overhang the sea, admiring the glories of the great ocean, and almost worshipping the picturesque beauties of the surrounding neighbourhood. But there was something besides the dash of the wild waves, and the bold masses of rock, the green valley laden with blossoms, and the antique ruin crumbling into oblivion, that gave my walks the charm of health and enjoyment. I always found that whatever subject my thought selected for meditation or admiration, it would glide imperceptibly towards an object in which there appeared a more abundant attraction—that object was Vincent. He was ever present. His gaze beamed upon me like a perpetual sunshine.

"I have just heard that he has been made prime minister. He is worthy of it. How proud I feel that he has acquired so great a dignity! His honours invest me with a species of exaltation far more enviable than the rarest distinction supplied from other sources. I have just been reading a newspaper in which his name is mentioned with such high praise as worth like his alone deserves. What a glow of gratification was diffused over my heart as I read each word of this flattering eulogy. In the same journal I perused the report of an important speech recently delivered by him in Parliament. How noble! how philosophic! how eloquent! What enlightened views! what patriotic desires! The pleasure I felt in reading that speech had obliterated the remembrance of my persecution.

"I was not aware till the other day that Vincent had ever ventured to publish any work. I knew that he had written several compositions, as admirable as all things are which proceed from him; but a book of his I had never imagined. Conceive my rapture in being presented with a production of which he is the acknowledged author. I was very impatient till I possessed the opportunity of sitting down alone to enjoy this unexpected gratification. I examined each thought as if it was a gem—and it *was* a gem—a rare and costly jewel. As I proceeded I found, like Aladdin, that I had entered a garden of treasures: such dazzling riches I

had never met with ; they grew in such abundance that the eye felt bewildered as it gazed. Never did my heart feel in such a flutter of delight as while admiring the productiveness of his imagination ; and so deep was the interest I felt in the perusal of his volumes, that, although the hour of sleep had long since passed, the dawn of the golden daylight found me still under the spell of the writer's influence. I laughed and cried by turns, for no other reason than because I could not help it ; I met with such provoking humour, and such exquisite pathos. Then the sentiments were so bold, the characters so natural, and the spirit of the work so thoroughly original.

" When I laid down the last volume, which I did not do till every line of the work had been greedily devoured, with a relish I had never before experienced, I asked myself, ' Was this written by Vincent ? *my* Vincent, the noble-minded and the true-hearted ? the instructor, the guardian, and the lover ? ' I could not doubt it, though it created in me a delightful astonishment. There were the manly nature and the generous spirit I had loved so long and so fervently. That book has ever since been my companion. I would not part with it for all the treasure, lost or found, or to be found, that the world contains.

" I have had another pleasant adventure. I went in company with Mrs. Thrift, who has long been my only companion, into the public library of this fashionable watering-place, when I observed several men very carefully placing a large bust upon a lofty pedestal. The back part of the bust being towards me, I could form no conception of whom it represented ; but when it was properly fixed in its place, I left Mrs. Thrift to make our purchases, for she is a famous person at shopping, and had the curiosity to go round to the other end of the shop for the purpose of obtaining a better view. I stood as if entranced. None can imagine my surprise—my ecstacy. There I beheld features too distinctly sculptured on my memory not to be readily recognised. It was the bust of Vincent ! The proprietor of the shop, observing my wonder, confessed that the original was so great a favourite of his, in his character as a minister and as a friend to the people, that he had procured his bust, and placed it in a situation where it might be seen to the best advantage. How delightedly I listened to the worthy man ! I

purchased of him many, many things I did not want, only because I might continue to hear Vincent praised. When I first recognised the likeness tears started into my eyes, but I would not have exchanged my feelings for those of the happiest being beneath the sun.

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" We have been for a considerable period in Paris—the gayest of all gay cities : but I find no gratification in its attractions. My father appears to have left England with a feeling of animosity. He talks of nothing but revolutions—thinks of nothing but republics. He has become acquainted with a young English nobleman, whom I never met with before, who is his constant companion. At first I thought our new friend a pleasant good-natured man, for he was always so obliging to me, so civil to papa, and so useful and agreeable upon all occasions ; but since, besides listening with every appearance of the most profound respect to Lord Melcombe's long orations upon political subjects, he has ventured, with more than the animosity of the marchioness, to abuse Vincent, and has even dared to regard me with particular attention, I have felt certain that I had judged him too favourably. My father has lately been much afflicted with the gout, and nothing can exceed the attention of his new friend. He will allow no one to apply the remedies, administer the medicines, and place the cushions for the affected foot but himself. He is always by my father's side, ever attempting to save him trouble, or to flatter his self-love ; indeed, he has worked his way into my father's good graces so completely, that papa can do nothing without his assistance, and consequently he has become as much one of the family as myself. I do not wish to judge harshly of any one, but I have no very high opinion of this Lord Sponge. He appears to be too fond of using flatteries to be sincere. But perhaps I am illiberal. However, I never can like any one who speaks ill of Vincent.

" A strange incident occurred here a few days since. While our family circle were quietly engaged at our usual occupations, Mrs. Thirst reading, I drawing, and Lord Sponge attending upon my father, Captain and Lady Mary Fuz-Grey were announced. I observed, as soon as the names were uttered, Lord Sponge suddenly drop the leg he was so carefully placing upon the cushion ; and while my

father screamed in agony, and I ran to his assistance, his lordship attempted to leave the room by another door. It was locked. At that moment the captain and his amiable lady entered. As soon as the former cast his eyes upon Lord Sponge, who seemed in an extraordinary state of confusion, he advanced towards him with a stern countenance, and, in a loud voice, demanded whether he preferred being thrown out the window or kicked down-stairs. We were all dreadfully alarmed. Lady Mary flung herself into her husband's arms, Mrs. Thrift screamed, my father bawled out to know the meaning of such behaviour, and I nearly fainted; when Lord Sponge, stammering and trembling and turning red and pale by turns, made a precipitate retreat; but not without a shower of epithets from Captain Fitz-Grey, which his lordship could not have considered either honourable or agreeable.

" That Lord Sponge was such a shocking character, and my father is so much vexed that he should have been deceived into lending him a large sum of money. The captain I knew in England, as Vincent's schoolfellow and friend. He has lost most of that poppy of manner and language that used to distinguish him; and although I should always have felt inclined to welcome him as Vincent's friend, the improvement in his appearance, and my gratitude for having been freed by him from a disagreeable companion, made me regard him with far more than my former kindness. Lady Mary is one of the most pleasant creatures I have known. She also knew Vincent, and speaks of him with the most friendly admiration. Already I love her like a sister. I have been surprised to learn that Vincent has now become, in the consideration of the people, quite as much the general enemy as he was the general favourite. How very fickle the people must be! They persecute and abuse him whom so lately they honoured and esteemed. But I cannot think such a change could have taken place. Everybody must love Vincent Herbert, but none more sincerely than his grateful and devoted Dora.

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" My father has just received some intelligence that obliges him to be in London as soon as possible. We are all in the bustle of departure: he is in excellent spirits, and I am all hope. Perhaps I shall soon see Vincent again

—soon hear the kind voice that ever breathed to me words of gentleness and affection ; and soon feel the presence of those smiles which have thrown around me a midsummer-day's gladness in all seasons. Dear Vincent ! How I tremble when I think that we may again meet as we met in Lord Brambleberry's library. I would endure an age of separation for such another meeting. Noble, generous, and gifted being ! how much I feel honoured by only imagining that you can bestow a thought upon one so little worthy of you."

CHAPTER IV.

The effect produced on me by the perusal of my cousin's journal.—The unexpected arrival of Stillborn the Fatalist, and the manner in which he receives my confession of guilt.—The last visit of Mephistopheles : with an account of what follows.—Sudden appearance of Dora.—The conclusion.

IT is scarcely possible to describe the different sensations I experienced as I read my cousin's journal. The truth became visible. She in the full power of steadfast love and unrivalled purity, remained innocent in thought and feeling, though tempted in every form in which vice might be made alluring, and a woman's heart subjected to its influence :—but I—I, in my superior wisdom and lofty ambition, had been deluded and betrayed into the commission of crimes which seemed sinking my soul into the deepest chasm of guilt. The same dark agency had led both into temptation, but Dora alone had stood the trial unharmed and unsullied.

" Oh, Dora !—dear, confiding, devoted girl," I exclaimed, " how much have you been deceived in my character !—How little you think me the monster I am ! While you, with that sincerity and singleness of heart by which you have ever been distinguished, have been enduring persecution and suffering for my sake, I, acknowledging no other influence than my ambition and sinful passions, have thought of nothing but power I knew not how to exercise, and not

only neglected the spirit that so truly worshipped me—abused and despised it—but offered up my love to another to whom it was a dishonour and a pollution. You, I have unworthily abandoned—myself I have irretrievably lost!"

My crimes appeared so numerous, and rose in such formidable array before my mind, that Hope seemed to have fled affrighted. I looked back upon the retrospect of my past life. What a gloomy vista! Onward I traced my progress, as the enemy of God and the shedder of human blood. The infernal orgies in which I had mingled at the witches' jubilee reappeared in all their horrors: then, in the terrible majesty of the grave, arose the victims of my treachery and revenge. Visibly before my throbbing eyeballs came the gentle Francisca looking more gentle—and her brave old father regarding me more sternly than either had done when living; after them came that noble enthusiast, whose generous spirit I had crushed in the enjoyment of my selfish purposes. She looked even more beautiful than in life, and in the wildness of her glance there was an adoration more exalted than that which had created her fond idolatry. Last of all, I beheld the deadly and determined hatred of my rival. There was an expression of triumph in his bloodless visage that seemed to foretel my approaching punishment.

The evening of the Sabbath had long commenced, and I paced my solitary chamber with no other light than the dim moon sent through the Gothic window. All around me was obscure and indistinct. The antique furniture threw long shadows upon the floor and on the wainscot, that seemed to resemble figures strange and inhuman. The suit of armour and the formidable weapons my heroic ancestors wore appeared in motion; and a stern countenance, as I fancied, frowned at me from under the helmet. I smiled at these phantasies. My mind, if it could not boast the power it possessed, was free from common weaknesses. Tired of pacing the long and gloomy apartments, I sat down. I continued reflecting on my desperate situation, without any hope of improving it, or of avoiding that dreadful fate, I now saw was speedy and inevitable. To Heaven I felt there was no reconciliation, and yet I sometimes thought of unburdening my breast of its fearful secrets to the good curate; but my guilt appeared so enormous that I imagined he would

shrink from my confession with horror. Wherever I looked for aid, there I beheld despair. The evil things I had done rose against me in multitudes, struggling with my better thoughts, my feeble hopes, my contrite feelings ; and like a swarm of locusts they devoured all that was springing up fresh and green before them.

My restlessness was too great to allow me to sit still. I started up. I strode over the floor. Now I stopped, fixed in anxious meditation. I saw no help. I seemed clinging to a rotten branch that hung over an unfathomable gulf, and the branch was cracking and bending beneath my weight : there was no support for my foot—there was no rest for my arms : if the branch did not break my strength would be exhausted : the sky frowned above—the chasm yawned beneath. I still held on—the branch still cracked, and every moment appeared rushing forward to plunge me into the frightful gulf. I tried to conquer the feeling of dread that was taking possession of all my faculties ; and the contest became so violent, that I could feel big drops of perspiration starting from every pore in my body. Every nerve seemed writhing in torture. My blood rushed through its narrow channels like a stream of lava—my heart heaved like a boiling maelstrom : all within me was scorching and consuming—all without darkness and dread. It was a struggle of intellectual with physical nature. I brought forward those mighty energies of the mind which had procured for me my high supremacy, and then the fears of the body crouched before them like stricken slaves : but the mental powers kept losing their superiority, as the corporal fears increased in number and boldness ; and it became doubtful whether that vast intelligence which had given me command over the immortal spirits, would not speedily sink into subjection beneath the natural weaknesses of poor humanity. Exhausted, and nearly subdued, I sunk down upon a seat.

From this position I was roused by a knocking at my chamber door. It was a servant, who came to inform me that a stranger, having lost his way to the neighbouring town, requested shelter, as the night was too far advanced to enable him to reach the nearest inn before the inmates had retired to rest. At first I objected to the application, but upon second thoughts I altered my mind. I was tired of communing with myself. I desired that the stranger might

be shown into my room. After having remained in the darkness so long, the light which the servant brought, as he ushered in my unknown guest, dazzled my eyes, and prevented me from observing his features; but when he commenced an apology for his intrusion, I recognised the voice of Stillborn, the Fatalist.

I was well pleased with the meeting. To have a friend near me at such a time gave me confidence. I heeded not the explanation he gave of what brought him into this part of the country; I was considering how I might turn his visit to advantage. The fearful situation in which I was placed required the counsel of some experienced and considerate friend. I had shrunk from making a confession to Mr. Thoroughgood: I thought his heart too pure to receive such a recital without producing an unfavourable impression; but Stillborn had confided to my ear secrets almost as dark and criminal as mine. The good curate was so much a man of virtue, that vice such as mine would appear too horrible for him to gaze on; but the deeds of the Fatalist partook of the same sanguinary hue as my own. Mutual crime, I thought, would produce mutual sympathy. Stillborn had not acknowledged an intimacy with the powers of darkness, but he had denied the existence of a Supreme Good. To his philosophy I had sometimes felt forcible objections; but his strong wisdom, his vast learning, and his searching insight into the mystery of things visible and invisible, now pointed him out to me as the most appropriate person in whom I could confide. It was some time before I could fix my determination. I scanned his features, to observe if anything encouraged me. I met the same melancholy and mysterious look that had at first attracted me towards him. Mine was not a confession to be made hastily. I hesitated—his manner seemed more friendly than usual—my indication increased—he asked kindly concerning the cause of the great alterations he remarked in my appearance. I resolved.

First gaining from him a promise of the strictest secrecy, and an assurance of his ready assistance—after attempting to fix his attention by alluding to the important matters I was going to relate, I told him the whole history of my engagement with Mephistopheles, and requested his aid to enable me to defeat the evil intentions of that treacherous spirit.

Stillborn listened without betraying any emotion : my connection with unnatural agents did not surprise him—my crimes he heard and noticed not—all I confessed he regarded with the same unvarying, mysterious, and melancholy expression of countenance that had distinguished him from the first. Almost immediately after I had concluded, the bell of the church clock struck the hour of twelve.

"The Sabbath is over!" exclaimed the Fatalist ; speaking for the first time since I had commenced my narrative.

"It is," said I, a little surprised at such an announcement from him at that moment.

"You want my aid?" he inquired.

"I do," I replied.

I had scarcely answered the question when, to my inexpressible horror, I beheld the prepossessing features and manly figure of Stillborn change into the demoniac face and inhuman form of Mephistopheles.

"Ha ! ha !" exclaimed the fiend, with that wild scornful laugh I never heard without feeling the marrow in my bones freeze into ice—"poordupe! thou hast thought then to escape me. As likely would the dove escape the vulture ; I have marked thee from thy youth—I was ever round thee prompting thee to evil, and encouraging thee in its commission. At college I attracted thy sympathies in a fictitious form—human nature is wonderfully taken with a little mystery !—I lured thee to Gottingen : there I obtained thy confidence by a wild narrative and a wilder philosophy—men are marvellously inclined towards the wondrous and the skeptical : I gradually made thee fit for my purpose before I appeared to thee in my proper shape. I led thee to the Brocken as I have done others. Dost thou remember thine oath ?"

"Too well!" I exclaimed in agony.

"Humph ! Such things are not intended to be forgotten," said he. "We made promises. I promised thee the fulfilment of all thy desires—not much to fulfil, considering the trifling selfishness of mankind—and I have granted thy desires. I never gain the credit I deserve for the rapidity with which I realize the wishes of my friends ; but I find so much gratification in doing a service, that it renders me indifferent to the applause I ought to receive. I have performed all thou didst require of me. Has not thy heart

been satiated with beauty ? Did not thy mind teem with intelligence ? Didst thou not rule the souls of thy fellow-men without a superior ? Love, fame, and power have been showered upon thee with a hand more liberal than thou didst desire : and now thou hast revelled in these enjoyments beyond a parallel, thou seekest to be freed from thy part of the compact. Miserable fool ! I have been at thy elbow even in thy most private moments—I have read thy thoughts—I have seen thy designs. What avail they ? thou art my victim beyond all remedy. From the hollow grave the voices of those whose blood thou hast shed cry out for justice. From the depths of thine own dark soul thy multitudinous crimes shriek thy damnation. In the unfathomed caverns of a darker world, myriads of thy fellow-dupes are preparing thee a welcome. Thy time is come—thy doom is sealed. Deliver up that which thou hast forfeited—surrender thy soul to the judgment.”

“ Never !” I exclaimed ; for a sudden gleam of hope seemed to give me courage, as I stood before the scorching gaze of my fearful associate. “ Thou hast deceived me : so will I act towards thee. The knowledge I obtained brought thee into my power : I did not obtain that knowledge from thee ; I owe thee no obligation for it. Begone, accursed fiend, and blast not my eyes with the sight of thy unholy countenance !”

The reply was conveyed in a laugh of derision.

“ I go !” said Mephistopheles at last, “ but thou goest with me.”

“ Never !” I replied.

“ Thou art, like the rest of thy treacherous race,” observed my companion, sneeringly, “ desperately enamoured of thy little life. But come ! I have no time to dally. Place thy hand in mine, and the next moment we shall be beyond the pale of this miserable world. Refuse, and I put forth a power so terrible that thy wretched nature shall be stifled in its first struggle !”

“ I deny thy power—I defy thy malice !” I replied.

“ I caution thee,” said Mephistopheles.

“ Begone ! false spirit !” I exclaimed, scornfully.

“ Wilt thou deliver up thy forfeited soul ?” he inquired

“ Never !” I repeated with greater energy than before.

He made a movement towards me, and at the same moment, with but slight knowledge of what I was about, I plucked from its resting-place the gigantic sword of my victorious ancestor, and struck with desperate force the advancing form of the demon. The weapon seemed to pass through his body, and immediately afterward the blade melted into liquid metal and fell upon the floor. While I gazed in terror at this convincing proof of the unearthly nature of my antagonist, the door behind me opened, and Dora, my own pure and excellent Dora, rushed in between us, and threw herself into my embrace. Mephistophiles for a few moments seemed as much surprised at her unexpected appearance as I was. "She cannot save thee. Nothing can save thee. Thou art mine beyond all hope of recovery!" said the demon, as he smiled contemptuously on the shrinking form of the fair intruder. Dora looked at the speaker with a dread she did not attempt to disguise, sank on her knees beside me, and motioned me to follow her example. But my stubborn knees refused to bend.

"Ay, pray!" exclaimed the fiend, with a scornful laugh; "kneel to the Power thou hast blasphemed. Put thy blood-stained hands together, and offer up supplications for thy immaculate soul. Dost think hypocrites find favour? But we lose time. For the last time I ask thee, wilt thou deliver up thy forfeited spirit into my hands?"

"Never!" I replied, with increased confidence; "never while I have speech to answer, never while I have the will to decide, never while I have life and strength. I am no longer deluded and betrayed. I see thee and know thee. Begone, thou dreaded and abhorred spirit; the air is tainted with thy breath: the world is polluted by thy presence; go to thy home of everlasting torture, and devise new schemes of mischief. Thou hast no business here!"

"Unparalleled liar!" shouted the demon, as he sprung towards me and grasped me by the throat. I felt as if my neck was in a vice of red-hot iron; my eyes started out of their sockets, burning with torture; my blood rushed upon the brain, and seemed congealing there in heavy masses: my cheek became dark; my lips livid; my limbs were convulsed; my heart throbbed feebly; and the scorching hand still seared in the flesh, until the fingers nearly met each other in the bone.

Dora beheld all this with terror and anxiety. Every gesticulation of hers was eloquent with fear—every look expressed alarm. Although her tongue was deprived of utterance, the rapid motion of her delicate limbs, and the varying expression of her beautiful features, spoke volumes of meaning. She saw the flaming eyes of the demon glaring with ferocity, as he gazed in triumph upon his struggling victim; she saw the distorted features of her lover blackening from the fixed grasp of his destroyer: again she exerted herself with renewed energy; now in desperate supplication, with inarticulate prayers besiegling Heaven for assistance; and a moment after, clinging convulsively to my limbs, endeavouring to make me kneel by her side.

The agony she endured was not less than my own. I could not see her—I saw nothing but the fierce glance of the fiend, becoming more malignant as his grasp was tightening on my throat; but I could hear the spasmodic action of her heart—her convulsive sobs—and her violent struggles to save me from the frightful death I had merited. She beheld me in the last throes of existence. All before my eyes became a black mass of impenetrable darkness. An aerial vapour took away the power of breathing. I gasped—plunged—clutched at the empty air. A burning cloud seemed gathering round me, crushing me in on every side. I felt as if the ground was sinking beneath my feet. A hope in the goodness of that Power I had abandoned and deceived, rose from the depths of my despairing soul like the smothered prayer of a drowning seaman.

Dora's efforts, though they appeared to grow more hopeless, increased in power. She had been making desperate, but fruitless endeavours to obtain my pardon from offended Heaven. My situation becoming more perilous, her exertions became more violent. The struggle had reached its acme. Human nature could endure no more. With eyes flashing wildly through her tears—with limbs trembling in fear and exhaustion—her looks distressed—her dress disordered—by one of those extraordinary efforts which nature makes only in such strange extremities, her tongue became freed from the chain that had bound it so long; and as she tottered forward between Mephistophiles and myself, and sank with outstretched hands upon her knees, in a voice

broken by emotion, she cried, "O, God of mercy, have pity on him!"

My enemy relaxed his hold, and, trembling with terror, started back from his prey as he witnessed the miracle. Scarcely had the prayer escaped from the dumb lips of the pure and holy suppliant, when a stream of light, so intensely vivid that no human eye could gaze upon it, flashed between her and the demon. With a yell of despair so horrible and fierce that the remembrance of it makes me shudder, and a look of such unnatural hatred and ferocity that Dora sank beneath it in affright upon the ground, the baffled fiend disappeared. I was only sensible of feeling the house shaking to its foundations, and hearing the elements raging with a fury unprecedented, when I fell, in a state bordering on death, from the grasp of Mephistophiles.

When I recovered to some semblance of consciousness, I found myself in a kneeling posture, supported by the arm of Dora, who was uttering loud and eloquent thanksgivings, with looks raised to heaven full of gratitude and love. I joined with a deep and earnest sincerity in the prayer ; and as I poured out my glad rejoicings and humble supplications with a contrite spirit, the voices of unseen angels seemed to fill the air with a melody whose exquisite sweetness had been unknown to mortal ears ; and they sang—

" Glory to the Highest !
O'er thy judgment-seat, star-paved,
Rose the sounds of pray'r and terror ;
Love in dread, and youth in error,—
They are saved ! "

" Glory to the Highest !
Woman pure and true hath craved,
For a man of wild ambition,
Pardon from his deep perdition.—
They are saved !

" Glory to the Highest !
From the FALSE ONE, who enslaved
Genius by a tempting proffer,
From THE DAMNED and THE SCOFFER—
They are saved !

“ Glory to the Highest !
Where in endless night are caved
Hypocrite and disbeliever,
Thou hast plunged THE DARK DECEIVER.—
They are saved !”

“ Glory to the Highest !
Youth, repent ! By perils braved
Souls, like thine, are overladen :
Heav’n smiles on thee, gentle maiden !—
They are saved !”

THE END.

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